

**MŌRĀN 'ETH'Ō - 9**

**Sebastian P. Brock**

**A BRIEF OUTLINE  
OF  
SYRIAC LITERATURE**

**ST. EPHREM ECUMENICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
BAKER HILL, KOTTAYAM - 686 001  
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By:

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## **FOREWORD**

The second, fourth and sixth numbers of MORAN ETHO were from the erudite pen of the great Syriac scholar of Oxford, Prof. Sebastian P. Brock. The present volume is one more most welcome contribution by him. It gives an opportunity to the English speaking world, to become aware of the immense wealth of literature in the Syriac language. The contents include brief biographies of Syriac authors, a list of their published and yet to be published writings, as well as selections from some of these. Thus, the interested scholar or student is enabled to have a glimpse of the treasures he can profit from.

The publication of this volume is at a most opportune time. SEERI (St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute) has started the M.A. course in Syriac language and literature under the Mahatma Gandhi University at Kottayam, Kerala. The students who have joined this course will find the present volume, most useful.

Prof. Brock draws attention to a large volume of writings in Syriac yet to be published. The scholars who do their research for the Ph.D. in Syriac in the M.G. University can profitably study such writings and make them available to the world at large.

SEERI is very grateful to Prof. Brock for having entrusted the publication of this work as another number of MORAN ETHO. It is quite in consonance with his constant interest in the activities and progress of this institution.

## PREFACE

This outline of Syriac literature aims to provide no more than an initial orientation to the subject. The number of authors and writings covered has deliberately been limited to the more important (or, in some cases, the more accessible); furthermore, although it is emphasised that the history of Syriac literature is a continuous one up to the present day, the focus of this outline has been on the period up to the early 14th century. The reasons for these limitations are largely practical ones: Syriac literature of the period up to c.1300 is often of particular significance and importance, and accordingly the editing of Syriac texts has largely been confined to authors of this period; but it should be noted that even here many important works remain unpublished, and reference has on occasion been made to these. On the whole, however, the writers selected and the works specifically mentioned in Section III are for the most part confined to those which are available in published form; within this section the most important authors are indicated with an asterisk (\*). Indication is also given of the availability of an English translation (and/or, on occasion, to translations into other modern European languages): thus ET = English translation, FT = French tr., GT = German tr. etc.; details of these can be found in Section VI. In Section IV preliminary guidance is given to certain specific topics. Some indication of the very large number of texts translated into Syriac is given in Section V. In order to give the reader a first impression of the variety to be found within Syriac literature, a small selection of short samples has been provided in Section VII. Finally, some basic guidance for further reading will be found in Section VIII.

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## I.

### A BIRD'S EYE VIEW: THE MAIN PERIODS

Syriac began as the local Aramaic dialect of Edessa (Urhay, modern Urfa in SE Turkey), with its own script, first attested in inscriptions of the first century AD. It must have been adopted as the literary language of Aramaic-speaking Christianity at an early date, and as a result of this its use spread rapidly along with the spread of Christianity in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire and in the Persian Empire further east. Syriac is in fact one of three Late Aramaic dialects which came to produce large surviving literatures, the other two being Jewish Aramaic and Mandaean; both in literary quality and in quantity Syriac easily surpasses these other two large Aramaic literatures.

Syriac literature covers from the second to the twentieth century AD. This long span of time can conveniently be broken up into six main periods:

- A. The earliest literature: 2nd-3rd century AD.
- B. Aphrahat, Ephrem, and other fourth-century writings.
- C. Fifth to mid seventh century.
- D. Mid seventh to end of the thirteenth century.
- E. Fourteenth to nineteenth century.
- F. Twentieth century.

Of these six periods, B-D (4th-13th cent.) provide the most extensive and most important literature.



## II.

### THE SECULAR AND ECCLESIASTICAL BACKGROUND.

(a) Periods A-C (2nd-7th cent.) belong to the time when Syriac writers were living either under the Roman Empire or under the Persian Empire (Parthians up to AD 226; Sasanians from 226 - 640). Syriac writers living under the Roman Empire (increasingly Christian from the fourth century onwards) mostly came from what is now SE Turkey and Syria; those living under the Zoroastrian Persian Empire were from modern Iraq, Iran and the Gulf States. Under the early Sasanians there were intermittent persecutions of Christians, mostly at times of war with the Roman Empire; the most serious of these were under Shapur II in the mid 4th century. By the 6th century Christianity had become a recognized minority religion, and martyrs from that period onwards were almost all Zoroastrian converts to Christianity from noble families.

Periods A-B (2nd-4th cent.) belong to the time of the undivided Church. Arianism was a serious threat in Ephrem's day. As a result of the christological controversies of the 5th century Syriac-speaking Christianity was divided into three ecclesiastical bodies: (1) the Church of the East (almost entirely in the Persian Empire, with a Catholicos Patriarch at Seleucia-Ctesiphon), which followed the strict Antiochene or dyophysite (two-nature) Christology advocated by Theodore of Mopsuestia; (2) those who (along with the Greek and all the Western Churches) accepted the christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon (451); these in the course of the 7th century emerged as two separate bodies, each under a different Patriarch of Antioch, namely the Melkites and the Maronites; and (3) the Syrian Orthodox, who (along with the Armenian, Coptic

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and Ethiopian Orthodox) rejected the Council of Chalcedon, and followed the Alexandrine or miaphysite (one-nature) Christology based on the teaching of Cyril of Alexandria. (The terms 'Nestorian' for the first group, and 'Monophysite' (or 'Jacobite') for the third group are seriously misleading, and should be avoided).

It should be noted that the 'ecumenical' councils of this period were councils convened by the Roman emperor, and so applied only within the Roman Empire (though they might subsequently be received outside it, as happened with the Council of Nicaea (325) which was officially accepted by the Church in the Persian Empire at a synod in 410).

The most important centres for Syriac literature were (in the Roman Empire): Edessa (modern Urfa), Nisibis (until 363), Serugh, Amid (modern Diyarbakir), Mabbug; by the sixth century there were a large number of monasteries in (what is now) North Syria and SE Turkey. In the Persian Empire the main centres were: Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Nisibis (after 363; its School was especially influential in the 6th cent.), Arbela, Karka d-Beit Slokh (modern Kirkuk), Beth Lapat (also called Gundeshapur), Karka d-Ledan, Qatar. In the sixth and seventh centuries many monasteries were founded especially in the Nisibis area and in what is now North Iraq.

Three main formative influences can be identified in periods A-C (2nd-7th cent.): ancient Mesopotamian (which included literature in earlier Aramaic dialects), biblical and Jewish, and Greek. The first two of these influences are most obvious in periods A-B (2nd-4th cent.), while the third becomes more and more dominant as time goes on, reaching a peak in the 7th century. Syriac Christianity is at its most distinctive in the fourth-century writers, and it has its own individual ascetic and proto-monastic tradition, quite independent at this date from the forms of monasticism which were developing in Egypt at the same time. Subsequently, however, the

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Egyptian monastic tradition, owing to its great prestige, became dominant in the area of Syriac Christianity as well, and the earlier distinctive Syriac ascetic tradition was largely forgotten.

(b) Periods D-F (7th-20th cent.) belong to the time of Islamic domination in the Middle East.

Period D (7th-13th cent.) belongs to the time of the Omayyads (7th-8th century), 'Abbasids (750-c.1100), Seljuks (in Turkey, 11th/12th centuries) and Mongols (from 13th century). Period E (14th-19th cent.) belongs to the time of (successively) Mongol, Mamluk (along with other local dynasties), and Ottoman rule in Western Asia, and opened with a time of great devastation and destruction through war and then the Black Death. Period F (20th cent.) belongs to the time of the break up of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the modern nation states in West Asia.

By the time of the Arab invasions the ecclesiastical boundaries between the different Christian communities had already become virtually fixed. The Syrian Orthodox and the Church of the East formed the largest of the Syriac Churches. From the 8th century onwards many writers of the Syriac Churches preferred to write in Arabic, rather than Syriac; thus there is very little Melkite and Maronite writing in Syriac after the 8th century, though Syriac remained the liturgical language in these Churches for much longer (in the Melkite Church Syriac was in a few localities used liturgically up to about the 17th century; in the Maronite Church it has continued to the present day, but in recent years is largely being replaced by Arabic). As a result of the widespread adoption of Arabic as a literary language especially in the Melkite and Maronite Churches, most Syriac literature in period D (7th-13th cent.), and all Syriac literature in periods E-F (14th-20th cent.) has been produced by writers from the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Churches (and, in the more recent centuries, their Eastern Rite Catholic counterparts).

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Especially in the late eighth and the first half of the ninth century scholars from the various Syriac Churches played an important role in the transmission of Greek philosophy and sciences to the Arab world through their translations and commentaries; best known of these scholars is Hunayn ibn Ishaq, whose normal practice was to translate first from Greek into Syriac, and then from Syriac into Arabic; the reason for this seemingly cumbersome process was that he was able to benefit from the experience of a long tradition of translating such Greek texts into Syriac, while there was no such tradition for translating from Greek into Arabic and so it was easier to work from one Semitic language (Syriac) to another (Arabic). Many of these texts of Greek origin eventually reached western Europe by way of translations from Arabic into Latin made in Spain in the twelfth century. Syriac scholars thus form an important link in the chain of transmission of ancient Greek philosophy and science to Western Europe.

The Byzantine reconquest of north Syria in the late tenth century resulted in renewed Greek influence there, above all in the area of liturgy; this applied especially to the Melkite Church, but also, to some extent, to the Syrian Orthodox. The Crusades (1096-1270) brought the first direct contact with the Western Church, and it was from this period that the Maronite Church accepted the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. It was not until the mid 16th century onwards that the other Eastern Rite Catholic Churches emerged: a schism in the Church of the East led to the creation of an independent Chaldean hierarchy (1551), while the separate Syrian Catholic Church emerged in the course of the second half of the 18th century (1782 marked the definite emergence of a separate hierarchy).

In India Syriac Christianity goes back, according to a very ancient tradition, to St Thomas; in any case Christianity was clearly well established in south India at an early date, and the ecclesiastical links were with the Church of the East, under the Catholicos

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Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Very little is known about the pre-Portuguese period (i.e. up to 1497) since unfortunately very few relevant historical documents survive. The latter part of the 16th century saw the attempt to latinize the Syriac rite in India and the suppression of many traditional features of the indigenous Church there. In reaction to this in the mid 17th century a group revolted against European ecclesiastical domination and connections were established with the hierarchy of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire. As a result an Indian hierarchy under the Syrian Orthodox patriarchate came into being and the West Syrian liturgical tradition was gradually introduced, replacing the earlier East Syrian tradition. Around the middle of the 19th century, under the influence of English missionaries, a group within the Syrian Orthodox Church sought to make various reforms, and this led to the emergence towards the end of the century of the independent Mar Thoma Church, which has the distinction of being the only 'Reformed' Church of Orthodox (as opposed to Catholic) origins.

During Period D (mid 7th - 13th century) the main centres of Syriac literature continued to be located in (what is now) E Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and NW Iran, the Syrian Orthodox predominantly in SE Turkey and Syria, but also to be found in Iraq (important centres were Tagrit, and the Monastery of Mar Mattai, SE of Mosul), and the Church of the East primarily in Iraq and NW Iran. The influence of the Church of the East, in particular, stretched along trade routes right across Asia, and a surviving Chinese-Syriac inscription in Xian, dated 781, records the arrival of Christianity in western China in 635.

During Period E (14th - 19th century) the Syrian Orthodox Church has important centres in the area of Malatya (Melitene) and Tur 'Abdin, as well as in northern Syria and northern Iraq; the Church of the East is primarily located in northern Iraq, eastern Turkey and NW Iran.

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The 20th century (Period F) has witnessed widespread displacements of the population of all the Syriac Churches due to war and (more recently) large-scale emigration to countries all over the world.

### III.

## THE SIX MAIN PERIODS EACH IN OUTLINE

### A. 1st-3rd CENTURIES.

This is the most obscure period of Syriac literature. Most texts are anonymous, and of uncertain date and origin; only a very few names of actual authors are known. The following are the most important works of this period:

1\*. PESHITTA OLD TESTAMENT. This was translated directly from Hebrew into Syriac; different books were translated by different people, and perhaps at different times. Probably at least some books were translated by Syriac-speaking Jews, and then taken over by the early Syriac-speaking Church; others may have been translated by early Jewish converts to Christianity. Certain books, notably the Pentateuch and Chronicles, contain isolated features or interpretations which are characteristic of the Targums (Jewish Aramaic translations of the Old Testament). Probably much of the Peshitta Old Testament had been translated by the end of the second century. Since Syriac is the local Aramaic dialect of Edessa, it is likely that the translation was made in Edessa, or in the region of Edessa. The name Peshitta is only first found in period D, when it was used to distinguish this traditional translation from a seventh-century translation from Greek (the Syro-hexapla).

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2\*. The DIATESSARON. Probably the earliest form of the New Testament to get into Syriac was the Diatessaron, or 'harmony' of the four Gospels, which provided the material from all four Gospels arranged as a single narrative. The Diatessaron is lost in its original form, and many uncertainties surround it. It is associated with the name of Tatian, who came from Syria or further east, studied in Rome under Justin Martyr, and then returned to the east c.170. If he composed the Diatessaron in Rome then its original language is likely to have been Greek (Latin is less likely), in which case the lost Syriac text was a translation (and could date from considerably later than Tatian's time); but if Tatian compiled it after his return to the east, then Syriac is likely to have been the original language in which it was written. At present there is insufficient evidence to decide between these two main possibilities.

3\*. The OLD SYRIAC GOSPELS. Two fifth-century manuscripts (known as the 'Curetonian' and 'Sinaiticus') of the Gospels preserve the oldest surviving text of the Syriac New Testament, called today the 'Old Syriac' [ET]. This is a comparatively free translation of the four separate Gospels, making use (it seems) here and there of the Diatessaron. The Greek text from which it was translated was very archaic in character and with many interesting features, as a result of which the Old Syriac is a witness of great importance for the study of the early history of the New Testament text. It is not known exactly when or where the Old Syriac translation was made: most scholars date it to the third century, but a few prefer the early fourth. It happens to be the earliest witness to the existence of the Peshitta Old Testament (or at least, specific books of it), since the translators used the Peshitta Old Testament text for quotations from the Old Testament in the Greek Gospels - even in cases where the Greek form of the quotation is rather different from that of the Peshitta Old Testament.

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4\*. BARDAISAN and the Book of the Laws of the Countries. Bardaisan is the one individual author from this period about whom something is known, including his exact dates (154-222). Bardaisan lived in Edessa and belonged to the court circles of King Abgar VIII, the Great. He must have been highly educated in Greek as well as in Syriac, but wrote only in Syriac, and was known as 'the Aramaean philosopher'. Since he was a speculative thinker some of whose ideas (e.g. on cosmology) were later considered unorthodox, his own writings have not survived, but he is known to have written in both prose and poetry. The Syriac Book of the Laws of the Countries, which does survive [ET], is often attributed to him, but in fact was probably written by one of his pupils, Philip. This work is a philosophical dialogue (essentially a Greek literary genre) on the subject of Fate; the speakers are Bardaisan and his various disciples. In the course of the work there is a description of the laws (or rather, customs) of various different ethnic groups; it is from this section that the current title derives. The work was translated into Greek (where it was known as 'On Fate', and attributed to Bardaisan himself), and is quoted both in the Clementine Recognitions (IX.19-29) and in Eusebius' work *The Preparation of the Gospel* (VI.10.1-48).

5\*. ODES OF SOLOMON [ET]. A group of 42 short lyric poems of great beauty survive almost complete in Syriac; one of these is also preserved in Greek, and five in Coptic. Date, place of origin and original language are all uncertain: some scholars see them as contemporary with the latest New Testament writings, having strong links with the Johannine literature; others place them in the mid or late second century, while others again see them as countering Manichaeism, and thus belonging to the late third century (Mani was put to death in 276). The original language was probably either Greek or Syriac, though Hebrew or another Aramaic dialect has also been suggested. If the Odes were written in Syriac, then they probably originate from the Edessa area; it should be

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noted, however, that they do not conform to the norms of any known Syriac verse form. Since the Odes of Solomon are highly allusive in character, it is difficult to determine the audience for which they were composed. Many of them evidently celebrate the liberated character of the baptised life in Christ (they are hardly hymns for the baptismal rite, as was once suggested). In several of the Odes the author appears to have Christ speaking in the first person, while in others the allusions and imagery defy any satisfactory interpretation.

6\*. The ACTS OF THOMAS [ET]. There is an extensive apocryphal literature associated with the name of Thomas. The two most important works are the Gospel of Thomas (probably written in Syria in the second century, and known from Greek fragments and a complete Coptic translation), and the Acts of 'Judas Thomas', composed in Syriac probably in the third century (place unknown). The Acts of Thomas survive in both Syriac and an early Greek translation; translations into several other Oriental Christian languages also exist. In general character the work resembles the various Greek apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, which belong to the genre of the novella, or 'romance' (the modern equivalent would be the historical novel). The Acts describe the apostle Thomas's mission to India, and the narrative is set out in thirteen sections (called 'acts'), followed by the Martyrdom of Thomas. Acts I-VI concern his time in North India and the conversion of king Gudnaphar, while Acts VII-XIII and the Martyrdom cover his experience at the court of king Mazdai (evidently in South India). The descriptions, at various points in the Acts, of the liturgical rites of baptism and eucharist (#25-27, 49, 121, 132, 157) are of great importance for students of early Syriac liturgical history. Incorporated into the Acts of Thomas are two famous poems which are probably earlier than the rest of the work; these poems are of an allegorical character, and are often known as the 'Hymn of the Bride' (#6-7) and the 'Hymn of the Pearl' (or, 'of the Soul'; ##108-13).

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The topics of the individual acts are: I (#1-16), the allocation of India to Judas Thomas, and his sale, by Christ, to Habban, a merchant of king Gudnaphar; on their arrival at Sandaruk they attend the wedding feast of the local king, during which Judas Thomas sings the song of the Bride of Light (#6-7); II (#17-29), Judas Thomas builds a palace for the king in heaven, rather than on earth; at first the king is angry, but is eventually won over and he receives baptism; III (#30-38), an episode concerning the Black Snake, where Judas Thomas revives a young man, slain by the snake; IV (#39-41), a colt invites Judas Thomas to ride on it in order to go to the city to preach; V (#42-50), Judas Thomas heals a woman possessed by a devil, and then baptizes her; VI (#51-61) he raises from the dead a young woman who had been murdered by a youth; she describes what she has seen in the underworld, and the torments of the wicked; VII (#62-67), an episode concerning a general (later on named as Sipur) who seeks the Apostle's help in healing his wife and daughter; he entrusts them to his deacon Xanthippos; VIII (#68-81), four wild asses offer their services to Judas Thomas, and they convey him and the general to the city, where the Apostle heals the general's wife and daughter; IX (#82-118) the conversion of Mygdonia, wife of Karish, a kinsman of king Mazdai; when Mygdonia refuses to sleep with Karish, he complains to Mazdai, who throws the Apostle into prison, where he sings the Hymn of the Soul (#108-113); X (#119-133) Mygdonia is baptised, together with her nurse Narkia; subsequently Sipur and his wife and daughter also ask for baptism; XI (#134-138), Mazdai's wife Tertia visits Mygdonia and is won over by the Apostle's teaching - to the dismay of Mazdai; XII (#139-149) Mazdai's son Vizan has various conversations with the Apostle, who is again imprisoned; XIII (#150-158), Vizan, his wife Manashar, and Tertia are all baptized; [XIV] The Martyrdom (#159-170): king Mazdai sentences the Apostle, orders some soldiers to take him up a nearby mountain and stab him to death. Judas subsequently appears to Sipur and Vizan, and to the women. Later, some dust from the Apostle's grave

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heals one of Mazdai's sons from demonic possession, and Mazdai himself confesses Christ.

7. A Syriac work attributed to 'MELITO the Philosopher' [ET], claiming to be a Discourse before Antoninus Caesar (i.e. the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, AD 161-180), belongs to the second-century genre of 'Apologies', or defences of Christianity addressed to the Roman Emperor, of which several examples survive in Greek. Since it envisages a time when the emperor might convert to Christianity, it is more likely to belong to the third, rather than the second, century. It is uncertain whether Syriac is the original language; since the work quotes 2 Peter (not in the early Syriac New Testament canon), it may well be that the Syriac is translated from a lost Greek original.

8. The Syriac SENTENCES OF MENANDER [ET] consist of wisdom sayings attributed to Menander the Sage. The work has no clear connection with a Greek collection of Menander Sentences; it is usually thought, however, that the Syriac is a translation and that the work was originally written perhaps in Egypt in the early Roman period. The author has little knowledge of Judaism and there are no traces of Christianity.

9. The LETTER OF MARA [ET] to his son Serapion, which gives various counsels of advice to his son in the face of the vanity of the world. The author purports to be a pagan, and passing mention is made of 'the wise king' (i.e. Jesus) who was killed by the Jews, as a result of which Jerusalem fell. The Letter has been dated variously to the late first century, the third century, or the fourth century; since the link between the destruction of Jerusalem (in AD 70) and the death of Jesus is characteristic of fourth-century Christian anti-Jewish polemic, it is likely that the Letter is in fact a Christian product of that century.

10\*. The story of the 'Aramaean Sage' AHIKAR [ET] has the distinction of being the longest-lived piece of Aramaic litera-

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ture, witnesses to it spanning two and a half millennia; the Aramaic text goes back at least to the fifth century BC, when it is already found in a papyrus from Elephantine (in the south of Egypt), and the work was evidently well known to the author of the book of Tobit, where Ahikar features as a close relative of Tobit (Tobit 1:21). In the Hellenistic period the book was translated into Greek (now lost, apart from a section which was incorporated into the Greek *Life of Aesop*). It is not known exactly how the story of Ahikar reached Syriac, but this was probably at an early date. Over the course of time translations have been made into many different languages, among them Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Georgian, Old Turkish, Modern Syriac, and (via the lost Greek) Romanian and Slavonic. The work consists of a narrative framework set in the time of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704-681 BC), and into this framework two sets of admonitions to Ahikar's nephew Nadan had been incorporated at an early date.

## B. THE FOURTH CENTURY

The middle and second half of the fourth century witness the first major Syriac writings to survive: the *Demonstrations of Aphrahat*, the extensive poetry and prose works by Ephrem, and the anonymous *Book of Steps* (*Liber Graduum*).

11\*. APHRAHAT (also known as 'the Persian Sage') is the author of a collection of 23 short works described as 'Demonstrations' or (sometimes) 'Letters' [FT, GT, partial ET]. The first 22 form an alphabetic acrostic (the Syriac alphabet has 22 letters), and 1-10 are specifically dated to AD 337, 11-22 to AD 344, and 23 to August AD 345. The exact identity of the author was unclear to later writers, and in the earliest manuscripts his name is given as 'Jacob', rather than 'Aphrahat', and this gave rise to his being incorrectly identified as Jacob, bishop of Nisibis (obviously impossible, since Jacob of Nisibis died in 338). This confusion must have arisen at an early date, since it is found in the Latin writer Gennadius (late



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fifth century), as well as in the early Armenian translation of the Demonstrations. In the Middle Ages further confusion was added when he was described as a bishop of the famous monastery of Mar Mattai.

Aphrahat (as he is regularly called today) was certainly writing within the Persian Empire, and must have been a figure of some authority within the Church (this emerges especially from Demonstrations 10 and 14, both of which are addressed to 'the bishops and clergy'). The Demonstrations cover a wide variety of topics, as can be seen from the following list:

- 1, On Faith [ET]
- 2, On Love [ET]
- 3, On Fasting
- 4, On Prayer [ET]
- 5, On Wars [ET]
- 6, On the Bnay Qyama [see below for these; ET]
- 7, On Penitents [ET]
- 8, On the Resurrection of the Dead [ET]
- 9, On Humility
- 10, On the Pastors [ET]
- 11, On Circumcision [ET]
- 12, On the Pascha [ET]
- 13, On the Sabbath [ET]
- 14, Exhortation
- 15, On the Distinction between foods [ET]
- 16, On the (gentile) Peoples who have taken the place of the (Jewish) People [ET]
- 17, On Christ the Son of God [ET]
- 18, Against the Jews, on Virginity and on Continence [ET]
- 19, Against the Jews who say that they will be gathered together again [ET]
- 20, On the Support of the Needy
- 21, On the Persecution [ET]

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- 22, On Death and the Last Times [ET]
- 23, On the Grape in the Cluster, in which there is Blessing (Isaiah 65:8). [partial ET]

The first group of ten Demonstrations are primarily concerned with aspects of the Christian life, while in the second group (11-22) many of the Demonstrations are aimed at Christians who were attracted by Judaism and had adopted various Jewish practices (it is not very likely that Aphrahat was arguing directly with Jews).

Demonstration 4 has the distinction of being the earliest Christian treatise in any language on prayer (as opposed to the Lord's Prayer, on which Origen had written in the third century).

Demonstration 6 is one of the most important sources for knowledge of the early Syriac ascetic tradition, independent of the influence (which was later to prove very strong) of Egyptian monasticism. The work is addressed to certain categories of men and women who had evidently made some sort of ascetic commitment, perhaps at the same time as baptism (which at that time would have been adult, rather than infant, baptism). The key terms used are *ihidaya*, *bnay qyama*, *bthule* and *qaddishe*. In later usage *ihidaya* means 'solitary, hermit', as opposed to *dayraya*, a cenobitic monk; in fourth-century texts, however, it has a much wider sense, covering all of the following: single (in the sense of celibate), single-minded, and follower of Christ the *ihidaya* (*ihidaya* corresponds to Greek *monogenes*, 'Only-Begotten'). *Bnay qyama*, literally 'children of the covenant' (singular *bar qyama* (masc.) and *bath qyama* (fem.)) seems to be another term for the same group; various suggestions have been made for the sense of *qyama* here, but on the whole it seems 'covenant', in the sense of formal commitment, is the most likely). The *ihidaya*, or *bnay qyama*, are made up of two categories, the *bthule* and the *qaddishe*. The term *bthule*, literally 'virgins', refers to unmarried men or women who have committed themselves to celibacy, while *qaddishe*, literally 'holy ones', is used

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of married people who have decided to refrain from sexual intercourse (the term derives from the Sinai narrative in Exodus 19: compare verse 10 with verse 15).

Demonstrations 5, 14 and 21 all concern contemporary events, and so are of historical significance.

Aphrahat's concern with Judaism in the second group was partly occasioned by external events: in the early 340s (perhaps 341), at a time of hostilities with the Roman Empire, a persecution took place and a number of prominent Christians, clergy and lay, were martyred. One of the causes of this seems to have been accusations, made by Jews influential in court circles, that the Christians secretly favoured the Romans (an accusation probably not without a grain of truth, as can be seen from the much earlier Dem. 5). (Demonstration 21 is specifically on this persecution).

Aphrahat's Demonstrations represent the first extensive piece of Syriac literature to survive. Many passages are written in an artistic and highly poetical form of prose, and his works constitute one of the best models of early Syriac prose style. Though certainly not untouched by Greek influence, Aphrahat is one of the least hellenized of Syriac writers.

12\*. EPHREM (c.306 - 9 vii 373). The date and place of his birth are unknown. His parents were probably both Christian, and most of his life was spent in Nisibis where he served as a deacon under its bishops, beginning with Jacob (James; d.338). In 363, when Nisibis was handed over to the Persian Empire the Christian population had to leave and so Ephrem spent the last ten years of his life in Edessa. It should be noted that the sixth-century biography of Ephrem is full of unreliable details, and gives a misleading portrait of him.

Ephrem wrote in both prose and poetry, and in both these mediums he made use of two separate forms: some of his prose works are in straightforward prose, while others are in a highly ar-

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tistic form of prose. In his poetry he makes use of both the *memra* and the *madrasha*. The *memra* is employed for narrative poetry, and is written in couplets consisting of 7 + 7 syllables (later known as the metre of Mar Ephrem), while the *madrasha* is used for lyric poetry written in stanzas, which can be in a variety of different syllabic metres, though for any one poem the same metre is adhered to throughout. Ephrem has a repertoire of some 50 different syllabic metres, ranging from the very straightforward (e.g. four lines, each of 5 syllables) to the highly complex.

Ephrem's great reputation rests primarily upon his poetry, and he is undoubtedly to be classed as the finest and greatest of all Syriac poets. At the same time Ephrem was a theologian of great insight, and one who deliberately preferred to express his theology through the medium of poetry rather than prose. No doubt as a result of his fame, a very large number of writings came to be transmitted under his name, many of which are certainly not genuinely by him, while uncertainty surrounds some of the others. Those mentioned below are for the most part generally accepted to be the genuine works.

The unsatisfactory eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editions of Ephrem's works have now almost entirely been replaced by better modern editions.

### Prose. (1) Ordinary Prose

- Commentary (*pushaqa*) on Genesis [ET].

- Exposition (*turgama*) on Exodus [ET]. A set of commentaries on most of the books of the Old Testament is attributed to Ephrem, but it is only these two that are likely to be genuine (or if not, at least to come from his circle). The biblical text is commented on in sequence, but unevenly; in the Commentary on Genesis a great deal of attention is paid to the early chapters (especially 1-6), while only intermittent comment is made on the rest of the



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book, with the exception of Gen.49, for which he offers two different sets of comment. The Interpretation on Exodus is much shorter and incomplete, ending with ch.32. Both works are remarkable for the large number of Jewish traditions to which they allude, and at times Ephrem quotes phrases which coincide with one or other of the Jewish Targums; it is not at all likely, however, that he had direct access to these, and his knowledge of Jewish traditions probably came to him orally.

- Commentary on the Diatessaron [ET]. The Syriac original of most of this work has only come to light within the last few decades; before that, the work was only known from an Armenian translation (which is still the only complete text). In this work Ephrem comments on the harmonized text of the Gospel known as the Diatessaron, rather than on a single Evangelist; besides being a very important witness to the text of the Diatessaron, the Commentary is of particular interest as an extensive fourth-century source for early Syriac exegesis of the Gospel text. The work is very varied in its literary character: some sections read more like notes, while others contain extended theological digressions; others, again, take on almost a lyrical character. Since the exegesis of the Commentary sometimes conflicts with that found in the Hymns, it has been suggested that the Commentary may derive from the followers of Ephrem, rather than Ephrem himself; to complicate matters further, there are some notable differences here and there between the Syriac and Armenian texts, and at one point there is a duplication in the text (X.1-2(beginning) and XV.19b). The Commentary also contains the only clear case in the whole of the Ephrem corpus of knowledge of Aphrahat: XVI.25 clearly reflects Aphrahat Dem.23:9.

- Commentary on Acts [LT]. This short work survives only in Armenian translation.

- Commentary on the Pauline Epistles [LT]. This too sur-

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vives only in Armenian. It includes a commentary on III Corinthians, an apocryphal letter of Paul which had quite wide circulation in the early Syriac Church, but which no longer survives in Syriac.

- Prose Refutations [ET]. Under this modern general title the following works are included: Five Discourses addressed to Hypatius, against false doctrines; Against Bardaisan's Discourse entitled 'Domnus' (the work is also known as Against the Platonists); Against false teaching (or: Against Marcion, I); Two Discourses against Marcion (or: Against Marcion II-III); Discourse against Mani.

### Prose (2) Artistic Prose

- Discourse on our Lord [ET].

- Letter to Publius [ET]. Two extensive extracts survive from this letter which consists in a meditation on the Last Judgement.

- Discourse on the Signs which Moses performed in Egypt [FT]. This belongs to a group of discourses under Ephrem's name, and this one alone has been judged to be genuine.

### Poetry (1) Narrative verse (memre)

- Six memre on Faith [ET]. Usually thought to be an early work.

- Memre on Nicomedia [FT]. This extensive cycle takes as its topic the devastation by earthquake of Nicomedia in 358. The work survives in Syriac only in a few quotations, but is available almost completely in an early Armenian translation.

- Memre against Bardaisan [ET].

A large number of memre are transmitted under Ephrem's name, only a few of which are likely to be genuine. In the four volumes of Sermones (= memre) in E.Beck's critical edition the

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following are considered by him as probably genuine:

### - I.1-3, On Reproof

- II.1, On Jonah and the Repentance of Nineveh [ET]. This long narrative poem was translated into Greek, Armenian, Georgian, and Ethiopic; many excerpts from it are to be found both in the Syrian Orthodox *Fenqitho* and in the Church of the East's *Hudra*.

- II.4, On the Sinful Woman (Luke 7) [ET]. The core of this influential poem is considered by Beck to be genuine. The narrative introduces the Seller of Unguents and Satan (posing as one of the Woman's former lovers), and these motifs are taken up by many later writers. There is a Greek adaptation, through which these motifs ultimately reached the medieval west.

- IV.2, On Solitaries [ET]. This alone of the texts in Beck's *Sermones III and IV* might possibly be genuine. The *memre* edited by him in his *Nachtrage zu Ephrem* are not likely to be genuine, and the same applies to the many *memre* published elsewhere under Ephrem's name.

Poetry (2) Lyrical poems (*madrashe*, or prayer songs; conventionally translated 'hymns')

These constitute Ephrem's most important writings; they come down to us in collections of varying sizes preserved with the poems in their complete form only in a small number of manuscripts of the fifth to seventh century (later manuscripts and the liturgical tradition provide only excerpts). It is uncertain whether these collections go back to Ephrem himself, or to some later editor/collector of his works; in any case, they were already in existence by 485, when Philoxenus refers to several of them (he also mentions some collections which no longer survive).

- *madrashe* on Faith [ET]. This is the largest collection (87), and it includes the famous group of five poems on the Pearl and its symbolism (81-85).

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- *madrashe* on Nisibis [ET for 1-21, 35-43, 52-68]. This collection of 77 poems is usually known under the Latin title given it by its first editor (Bickell); only the first 34 concern Nisibis and its bishops, while the remainder are for the most part concerned with the theme of the Descent of Christ into the Underworld (*Sheol*). In a small group of the second half (nos 52-54) Ephrem employs the ancient Mesopotamian genre of the precedence dispute, where two characters (in this case Satan and Death) dispute in alternating verses over which of the two has superior power over human beings; this genre was subsequently taken up and adapted by the authors of the later Dialogue poems between pairs of biblical characters (see 17, below, for these).

- *madrashe* against Heresies. Most of the poems in this group of 56 *madrashe* are directed against the teaching of Marcion, Bardaisan and Mani; they probably belong to Ephrem's last ten years when he was in Edessa.

- *madrashe* on Virginity [ET]. This collection of 52 poems (a few are lost or damaged) covers many other topics as well (e.g. 4-7 are entitled 'On oil, the olive, and the mysteries of our Lord').

- *madrashe* on the Church [GT]. This collection, also of 52 poems, covers a variety of topics; there are several gaps where the manuscript is defective.

- *madrashe* on the Nativity [ET]. This collection was probably originally much larger than the 28 poems in Beck's edition, and is likely to have included a small number of perhaps genuine poems in the collection now entitled 'On Epiphany' (in Ephrem's day the Nativity and Epiphany (Baptism) of Christ were celebrated on the same day, 6th Jan.). Excerpts from a number of them feature in the liturgical texts for the period of Subbara and Nativity in both the *Fenqitho* and the *Hudra*.

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- madrashe on Unleavened Bread (21), on the Crucifixion (9), and on the Resurrection (5) [FT]. The first group of this Paschal cycle is missing several poems in the middle. A number of stanzas from these madrashe also feature in the Fenqitho and Hudra.

- madrashe on Paradise [ET]. This group of 15 poems probably belong to his time in Nisibis.

- madrashe on the Fast (10).

- madrashe against Julian [ET]. This small collection of four madrashe is concerned with the death of the emperor Julian on campaign in the Persian Empire in 363; this was seen by Ephrem (and by Christian writers in general) as a punishment for his reversion to paganism and his various actions taken against Christianity.

- Three further collections, on the ascetics Abraham of Qidun (15) and Julian the Elder (Saba; 24), and on the Confessors (6) are attributed to Ephrem, but most of these madrashe cannot be by him for various reasons; those which may be genuine are: On Abraham of Qidun 1-5; on Julian Saba 1-4.

- A collection of 51 hymns [LT] is preserved only in Armenian translation. Some at least of these could well be genuine and represent material belonging to some of the lost collections of madrashe.

13\*. BOOK OF STEPS (LIBER GRADUUM). This is a work dealing with spiritual direction, consisting in 30 chapters [LT; ET forthcoming]. The author, who almost certainly lived in the Persian Empire (there is a reference to the river Zab, a tributary of the river Tigris), is unknown; probably he was writing in the late fourth century (or possibly early fifth). Within the Christian community which the anonymous author is addressing a distinction is made between the 'Upright' (ki'ne) and the 'Perfect' or 'Mature' (gmire): the former observe the 'lesser commandments' and live a

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life of active charity, while the latter follow the 'greater commandments', which involve a total renunciation of belongings and a radical imitation of the life of Christ.

The Book of Steps was rarely copied as a whole, and most of the (fairly numerous) manuscripts contain only a small number of Discourses (sometimes misattributed: e.g. 14 is wrongly attributed to Evagrius). The Book of Steps' two-fold classification was taken up later by Philoxenus (see 22, below), whereas most subsequent writers preferred the three-fold model developed by John the Solitary (see 16, below).

The 30 chapters have the following headings:

- 1, On the distinction between the major commandments, for the perfect, and the minor commandments; for the upright.
- 2, On those who wish to be perfect.
- 3, The physical and the spiritual ministry.
- 4, On 'vegetables' for the sick (cp Rom. 14:2).
- 5, On 'milk' for infants (cp I Cor. 3:1-2).
- 6, On the person who becomes perfect and continues to grow.
- 7, On the commandments for the upright.
- 8, On the person who gives all he has to the poor to eat.
- 9, On uprightness and on the love of the upright and of the prophets.
- 10, On the advantage we have when we endure evil while performing good; and on fasting and humiliation of body and soul.
- 11, On hearing the Scriptures, and when the Law is read before us.
- 12, On the ministry of the hidden and the revealed church.
- 13, On the way of life of the upright.
- 14, On the upright and the perfect.
- 15, On the marriage instinct in Adam.
- 16, On how a person grows as a result of the major commandments.

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- 17, On the sufferings of our Lord, by which an example is provided for us.
- 18, On the tears of prayer.
- 19, On the distinguishing characteristics of the way of perfection.
- 20, On the hard steps on this way.
- 21, On the Tree of Adam.
- 22, On the judgements by which those who make them are not saved.
- 23, On Satan, Pharoah, and the Children of Israel.
- 24, On repentance.
- 25, On the voice of God and that of Satan.
- 26, On the second law which the Lord laid down for Adam.
- 27, On the matter of the thief who was saved.
- 28, On the human soul not being blood.
- 29, On subduing the body.
- 30, On the commandments of faith and of love of the Solitaries.

## C. FIFTH TO MID SEVENTH CENTURIES

### (a) 5th cent.

14. CYRILLONA. (fl. c.400). A small collection of six verse texts (which evidently belong together) include two which are specifically attributed to a Cyrillona, whose identity remains mysterious. Since one of the poems concerns an incursion of the Huns, this can be dated to c.396. Some modern writers have identified him with 'Absamya, the son of Ephrem's sister, solely on the grounds that he is also said to have written a poem on an incursion by the Huns; even more unlikely is the suggestion that he is to be identified as Qiyore (Cyrus), head of the School of Edessa. The six poems are in several different metres and cover the following topics: on locusts and on the incursion of the Huns; on the Washing of the Feet; on the Pasch; on the Crucifixion; on Wheat and

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its symbolism; and on Zacchaeus (those on the incursion of the Huns and the Crucifixion are the ones specifically attributed to Cyrillona). [GT, FT, IT].

15. BALAI. (fl. first half of 5th cent.). Nothing is known of the life of this poet except that he was a chorepiskopos, perhaps in the area around Aleppo.

- Five *madrashe* in honour of the departed bishop Akakios of Beroea (Aleppo).

- A *madrasha* written for the dedication of a new church in Qenneshrin (Chalkis). [ET, FT, GT].

- Many short liturgical *ba'awata* (supplicatory hymns) in the five-syllable metre (known as the metre of Mar Balai) are attributed to him, but whether correctly or not is uncertain.

- An early manuscript of the epic poem on Joseph (in 12 *memre*, employing the 7+7 syllable metre) attributes this work to Balai, rather than to Ephrem: its true author remains uncertain.

16\*. JOHN THE SOLITARY (John of Apamea). (first half 5th cent.). Much uncertainty surrounds the identity of the author of a considerable number of works on spirituality: the manuscripts attribute them variously to John the Solitary, John of Apamea, and John of Lykopolis (or Thebes; d. c.394); the last is certainly incorrect, but it seems quite likely that John the Solitary and John of Apamea are one and the same person who belongs to the first half of the fifth century, and is to be distinguished from 'John the Egyptian', whose teaching Philoxenos opposed, and a later 'John of Apamea', condemned at a Syrian synod in 786/7. The works published so far under John's name all seem to be genuinely by the same author, and their threefold pattern of the spiritual life, the stages

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of the body, of the soul and of the spirit, was to prove very influential on later Syriac monastic writers. John must have received his education in both Greek and Syriac, and he may have had some training in medicine. Several of his works are in the form of dialogues, imitating the Greek genre of the philosophical dialogue that had already been used in the Book of the Laws of the Countries. His main works so far published are:

- A dialogue on the soul and the passions [FT].
- Commentary on Qohelet (Ecclesiastes).
- Three Letters [GT], the first addressed to Theodoulos and his circle, the other two to Eutropios and Eusebios.
- Six Dialogues with Thaumasio; Letters and treatises addressed to Thaumasio, on the mystery of the economy of Christ [GT, FT].
- Three discourses [ET of 1; GT]; the first is on perfection, or stillness; the second and third on the mystery of baptism.
- Letter to Hesychios, on the monastic life [ET].
- Discourse on Prayer [ET].

A considerable number of works still remain to be published.

17\*. ANONYMOUS POETRY. Although it is very difficult to assign a date to anonymous poetry (of which a great deal survives), the following narrative poems (memre) on biblical topics probably belong to the fifth century:

- Memra on Abraham and Sarah in Egypt (Gen.12:10-20) [ET].
- Two memre on the Sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22) [ET]. The second of these makes use of the first, and both give a prominent place to Sarah (who is never mentioned in the biblical narrative).

#### Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

- Four memre on Joseph (attributed to Narsai, but probably not by him) [ET of 3-4].
- Memra on Elijah and the Widow of Sarepta (1 Kings 17) [ET].
- Memra on Mary and Joseph [ET].

It is likely that many of the dialogue soghyatha dealing with biblical characters also belong to the fifth century since they are transmitted in both East and West Syriac manuscripts; among these will be:

- Abel and Cain [GT]; Mary and the Angel [ET]; Mary and the Magi [ET]; John the Baptist and Christ [ET]; The Cherub and the Thief [ET]; the Dispute of the Months [ET].

Many anonymous madrashe, such as many of those on the Virgin Mary [ET], are also likely to belong to the fifth century.

18\*. ANONYMOUS PROSE: HAGIOGRAPHY. Very early manuscripts can sometimes assure a fifth-century date for a hagiographical text; in other cases, such dating is less secure, but nevertheless probable. The following are the most notable works:

- Life of Abraham of Qidun and his niece Mary (wrongly attributed to Ephrem) [ET for section on Mary]. This was translated into Greek and thence into Latin; the Latin served as the basis for a play on this subject by the tenth-century nun Hrotswitha of Gandersheim.

- Life of the Man of God [FT, ET]. The earliest form of this work was composed in Syriac, and this was translated into Greek in a re-edited form where the hero is now named Alexis; this amplified Greek story was subsequently translated back into Syriac, as well as into Latin (which served as the basis for one of the earliest

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pieces of medieval French literature).

- Martyrdoms of Shmona, Gurya and Habbib [ET]. The cult of these Edessene martyrs (probably martyred in 297 and 309) spread widely and the Syriac Acts were translated into Greek.

- Teaching of Addai [ET], Martyrdoms of Sharbel and Barsamya [ET]. The Teaching of Addai recounts in much more extended form the legend of the correspondence between king Abgar the Black of Edessa and Jesus, which is already recorded by Eusebius in Greek translation in his Ecclesiastical History (I.13). Among the additional materials are sermons in Edessa by Addai, and an early account of the Finding of the Cross (by Protonike, wife of the emperor Claudius, rather than by Helena, mother of Constantine, as the standard legend has it). The Teaching of Addai has many features in common with the purely legendary martyrdoms (under Trajan) of Sharbel and Barsamya. It is quite likely that this group of texts was produced in Edessa in the 420s and 430s in circles supporting Ibas against bishop Rabbula.

- Euphemia and the Goth [ET]. This local Edessene narrative concerns the story of a young woman of Edessa forcefully married to a Goth who had been billeted in her mother's house.

- Acts of the Persian martyrs under Shapur II. A large number of texts concerning martyrs during Shapur's persecution of Christians in the 340's come down to us; these vary very considerably in character, date and reliability. It is likely that the oldest ones were written in the early decades of the fifth century, and these include: the older of the two (related) Acts of the Catholicos Simeon bar Sabba'e, the martyrdoms of Miles, of Pusai, of Martha [ET], and those of several other martyrs. In the course of time many further accounts of martyrs from this, the most severe of persecutions under the Sasanians, came to be written.

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- Acts of the Persian martyrs under Yezdgerd I and Bahram V. A small group of short but important accounts of martyrdoms in the early 420s survives (one of these is attributed to a certain Abgar); they include the martyrdoms of Narsai (not the poet!), Tataq, Jacob the Notary, the ten martyrs of Beth Garmai, 'Abda, Peroz and Mihrshabur. The martyrdom of 'Abda is incomplete, but further information about it is provided in Greek, in Theodoret's Ecclesiastical History V.39.

- Acts of the Persian martyrs under Yezdgerd II. Several extensive accounts of martyrdoms from the 440s come down, notably the cycle of texts concerning Pethion, where the narratives have taken on legendary proportions [ET of martyrdom of Anahid].

- Life of Symeon the Stylite [ET]. This was composed shortly after Symeon's death in 459 by a monk of the monastery attached to Symeon's pillar. Together with Theodoret's short eyewitness account in his Historia Religiosa, this is the most important source for the life of this influential pillar saint. The Syriac Life survives in at least two slightly different forms.

- 'Julian Romance' [ET]. This long work, bitterly hostile to the emperor Julian, slain in battle in 363, is primarily concerned with his successor, Jovian, who is portrayed in highly eulogistic terms. The work (whose opening is lost) was certainly composed in Edessa, and probably belongs to the fifth century (rather than the sixth, as was formerly thought).

- Life of Rabbula [ET in preparation], bishop of Edessa 411-436. This is in the form of a panegyric. (Rabbula was himself an author who wrote in both Greek and Syriac; of the latter, only his translation of Cyril of Alexandria's work On True Faith and some ecclesiastical canons survive).

- Prose homily on Abraham and Isaac (Gen.22) [ET].



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19\*. NARSAI. (E; c.399-c.502). Born in the Persian Empire at 'Ain Dulba in Ma'alta, he was orphaned at an early age and was brought up by an uncle who was superior of the monastery of Kfar Mari, near Beth Zabdai; he also spent 10 years as a student at the Persian School in Edessa, to which he subsequently returned as a teacher, eventually (at an unknown date) becoming its Head. Owing to conflict with the bishop Cyrus, Narsai left Edessa (perhaps c.471) for Nisibis, where, with the help of its bishop Barsauma he reestablished the School (which no doubt took in the staff and students of the Persian School of Edessa when that was closed in 489 by order of the emperor Zeno); he was still alive in 496, the date of the first Statutes of the School of Nisibis [ET]. The date of his death, certainly at a great age, is not known. His surviving works are all in verse, being memre using both the 7:7 and 12:12 metres. Some eighty memre, or verse homilies, are preserved, the majority dealing with biblical topics (both Old and New Testaments); there is also an important group which constitute verse commentaries on the baptismal and eucharistic rites. Although Narsai is probably the most important poet of the Church of the East, only a small number of his homilies are so far available in modern translations; these include:

- 6 memre on Creation [FT].

- 4 memre on baptism and eucharist (one of these, Homily 17, is almost certainly not by Narsai himself, but must date from the sixth century) [ET].

- 5 memre on dominical feasts (Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension) [ET]. These include several passages of christological concern, where Narsai opposes the position of Cyril of Alexandria.

- 6 memre on Old Testament topics [ET]: Enoch and Elijah, Flood, Blessings of Noah, Tower of Babel, Tabernacle, Brazen Serpent.

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- 5 memre on Gospel Parables [FT]: Ten Virgins, Prodigal Son, Rich man and Lazarus, Workers in the Vineyard, Wheat and Tares.

- Memra on the Three Doctors (Diodore, Nestorius, Theodore) [FT].

The dialogue soghyatha attributed to Narsai are almost certainly not by him.

#### (b) 5th/6th cent.

20\*. JACOB of SERUGH (W; d.29 Nov 521). Jacob, perhaps the finest Syriac poet after Ephrem, was born at Kurtam on the river Euphrates some time in the middle of the fifth century; he received his education at the Persian School in Edessa, but reacted against its christological teaching. At an unknown date he became chorepiskopos in the Serugh area (to SW of Edessa), and in 519 was appointed bishop of Batnan da-Srugh. He evidently disliked and tried to keep out of the contemporary christological controversies, and it is only from some of his Letters that (under pressure from his correspondents) he openly expresses his disapproval of the doctrinal formula of Chalcedon (451). His fame rests chiefly on a very large number of surviving memre in the 12-syllable metre; some 225 of these have been edited so far, but many more still remain unpublished. The vast majority of the memre deal with biblical topics, often in a highly imaginative way. In several memre (notably those on the Six Days of Creation) the influence of the exegesis of Theodore of Mopsuestia can be discerned, a legacy of Jacob's education at the Persian School in Edessa. A number of homilies are devoted to different aspects of the life of the Virgin Mary, and there are also some which deal with particular saints (e.g. Simeon the Stylite); others cover a variety of other topics, including ascetic, liturgical and eschatological themes. Six prose homi-

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lies (turgame) also survive, concerned with the Nativity, Epiphany, the Great Fast (Lent), Palm Sunday (Hosha'na), the Passion, and the Resurrection. Jacob has also left 43 Letters, prose lives of two contemporary saints (Daniel of Galash and Hannina), and various *madrashé*; of these only the Letters have so far been published. Three Anaphoras and the Maronite baptismal service are also attributed to Jacob. As with Narsai, only a small number of Jacob's works are yet available in modern translations, notably the following:

- Memre concerning the Virgin Mary [IT, ET forthcoming].
- 7 memre against the Jews [FT]. The sixth of these is in the form of a dispute between the Synagogue and the Church.
- Memre on the dominical Feasts [ET forthcoming].
- 4 memre on Creation [FT]
- Memra on the Veil of Moses [ET].
- Memra on Ephrem [ET].
- Memra on Simeon the Stylite [ET].
- Prose homilies, or turgame [FT, ET forthcoming].
- Various Letters [FT] and other memre [ET].

21. SIMEON the POTTER (Quqaya) (W; fl. early 6th cent.). The poetic talents of this potter from the North Syrian village of Geshir were discovered by Jacob of Sarugh. 9 short poems on the Nativity [ET] survive, and these gave rise to a popular genre of short poems known as *quqyoto*.

22\*. PHILOXENOS/AKSENOYO of MABBUG (W; d.10 Dec 523). He was born in the Persian Empire, at Tahel in Beth Garmai. According to a late biography he studied first at the monastery of Mar Gabriel in Tur 'Abdin before going on to the Persian School in Edessa. There he was one of a number of students who

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reacted against the School's dyophysite, or two-nature, Christological tradition (others included Jacob of Serugh and Simeon of Beth Arsham); he became a strong opponent of the Council of Chalcedon and played an active part in the various controversies of the time. In 485 he became metropolitan of Mabbug (consecrated on 18 August). After the death of the emperor Anastasius in 518 the anti-Chalcedonian bishops were exiled as a result of the pro-Chalcedonian policy of the new emperor, Justin I. Philoxenos was exiled first to Gangra (in Paphlagonia) and then (c.520/1) to Philippoupolis (in Thrace), where he died, reputedly from suffocation by smoke from the public baths.

Philoxenos was the most important Syrian Orthodox theologian writing in Syriac of his time. Although his own knowledge of Greek was probably not very profound, he became aware of the need to translate key Greek texts, such as the New Testament and the Creed, with greater fidelity to the Greek original, and so he sponsored revised translations of these (the New Testament revision was undertaken by Polycarp, his *chorepiskopos*, and completed in 508). The following are his most important works:

- 'Admonition on (the monastic) way of life', in 13 memre [ET, FT]. This important work of monastic guidance survives in a large number of manuscripts, indicating its popularity.

- Ten memre on the phrase "One of the holy Trinity was embodied and suffered"; also known as 'the memre against Habbib' [LT/FT]. At the end there is an important florilegium, with short excerpts from both Greek and Syriac writers. This is an early work, dating from c.482/4.

- 'Three memre on the Trinity and on the Incarnation'; also known as 'the Book of Opinions (Ktaba d-re'yane)' [LT].

- Commentary on the Prologue of St John [FT]. This important work is not so much a commentary as a theological treatise



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focusing on John ch.1; it must date from shortly after 508, since it mentions the revision of the Peshitta New Testament which he sponsored (Philoxenos also explains why it was necessary).

- Commentary on St Matthew and St Luke [ET]. This only survives in fragmentary form.

- Memra on the Annunciation [GT]. This perhaps belongs to the previous item.

- Memra on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit [ET,FT]. This is concerned with the question whether the Holy Spirit departs from someone who sins.

- Letters. A considerable number of letters survive (sometimes only in excerpts), and some of these constitute lengthy theological treatises. The following have been published:

- Letter on Faith, addressed to the Monks [ET, FT].

- Letter to the emperor Zeno, on the incarnation of God the Word [ET].

- First Letter to the monks of Beth Gaugal [ET].

- Second Letter to the monks of Beth Gaugal [FT].

- Letter to the monks of Senoun [FT].

- Letter to the monks of Tell 'Ada.

- Letter to Patricius of Edessa [FT]. An abbreviated form of this monastic letter was included in the Greek translation of the 'First Part' of Isaac of Nineveh's writings, featuring there under Isaac's name.

- Letter to Abraham and Orestes, priests of Edessa, concerning Stephen bar Sudhaili [ET].

- Letter to Abu Ya'far, the stratelates (general) of Hirta d-Na'man. The authenticity of this is uncertain.

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- Letter to the Palestinian monks [FT].

- Letter to the Lector Maron from Anazarba [FT].

- Letter to Shem'on, abbot of the monastery of Tell 'Ada [FT].

- Letter to the orthodox monks in the East [FT].

- Letter to someone recently converted from the world (i.e., a novice) [ET].

- Letter to a convert from Judaism [FT].

A Letter on the three stages of the monastic life is also attributed to Philoxenos, but this is certainly incorrect; the work probably belongs to Joseph the Seer (see 67, below).

- Excerpts on Prayer [ET].

- Three anaphoras and a short baptismal rite are attributed to Philoxenos, but whether he is really the author is far from certain.

23\*. ISAAC of ANTIOCH. The conventional designation 'Isaac of Antioch' in fact covers several different poets by the name of Isaac. In the seventh century Jacob of Edessa already distinguished three different people: (1) Isaac of Amid, said to have been a pupil of Ephrem, who visited Rome and who served as a priest in Amid (other sources state that this Isaac was a pupil of Ephrem's pupil Zenobius, and not of Ephrem himself); he is probably the author of a surviving memra on Constantinople; (2) Isaac 'the Great', from Edessa, who flourished at the time of Peter the Fuller, patriarch of Antioch (d. 488). This Isaac is probably the author of the long poem on the Parrot in Antioch which sang the Trisagion with Peter the Fuller's additional wording 'who was crucified for us'; (3) Another Isaac from Edessa, who began as an anti-Chalcedonian, but under bishop Asklepios of Edessa (522-525)

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became Chalcedonian. In addition to these three Isaacs, belonging respectively to the first half of the fifth century, the second half of the fifth century and the early sixth century, there was probably a fourth poet Isaac, designated 'Isaac the Solitary'. Nearly 200 memre attributed to one or other Isaac survive, but of these only 69 have been published so far, and for the most part it is unclear to which of the Isaacs these should be allocated. Of the homilies that have been published only very few correspond with those to be found in the earliest manuscripts (sixth century), where the author is simply designated 'Isaac the teacher'. Very little of the corpus of homilies under the name of Isaac is available in modern translation:

- Memra on Constantinople [ET].
- Memra against the Jews [ET].
- Two memre on the Incarnation [FT].

A facing Latin translation is available for the 37 texts by Isaac edited by Bickell (1973); these include some madrashe.

24. SYMMACHUS (W). This otherwise unknown author has left an imaginative Life of Abel [ET]. He is probably not the same man as the Symmachus who wrote a commentary on Song of Songs 6:10 - end (to supplement that of the Syriac translation of Gregory of Nyssa's commentary on that book).

#### (c) 6th cent.

25. ANONYMOUS CHRONICLE, often known as that of 'Joshua the Stylite' (W; first quarter of 6th cent.). This local Edessene chronicle, which gives a detailed account of events in the Edessa area from 495-507, has been preserved through its incorporation into the late eighth-century Zuqnin Chronicle (= 69 below).

#### Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

26. STEPHEN bar SUDHAILI (W; fl. early 6th cent.). A speculative thinker with pantheist tendencies, he was probably the author of the Book of the Holy Hierotheos [ET], which purports to be by Hierotheos, the teacher of Dionysius the Areopagite. He was the recipient of letters from both Philoxenus and Jacob of Serugh.

27. SERGIUS of RESH'AINA (W; d.536). A priest and archiatros, Sergius received his education in Alexandria; he is chiefly famous for his translations from Greek, which included several of Galen's medical writings and the Dionysian Corpus (Sergius' translation of this was subsequently revised at the end of the seventh century by Phokas of Edessa). (Translations of Porphyry's Eisagoge, or Introduction to Aristotle's Logical works, and of Aristotle's Categories have been attributed to Sergius, but this cannot be correct). His surviving original writings include:

- a treatise on the spiritual life, serving as an introduction to his translation of Dionysius the Areopagite [FT].

- Two introductions to Aristotle's Logic, a longer one addressed to Theodore of Karkh Juddan, and a shorter one to Philotheos (unpublished).

28. SHEM'ON (SIMEON) of BETH ARSHAM (W; d.c.548). Syrian Orthodox bishop of Beth Arsham (on the Tigris), to whom are ascribed two letters [ET] of great historical importance concerning the Christian martyrs of Najran (in 518, 522 or 523: the precise date is uncertain), and of a polemical treatise 'On Barsauma [of Nisibis] and the Sect of the Nestorians', which deals with the spread of dyophysite christology in the East, as seen from a hostile perspective. It has been suggested that Shem'on is also the author of the Book of the Himyarites [ET], which is a further,

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slightly later, account of the martyrdoms (the work is unfortunately not preserved complete); this, however, is doubtful, and indeed the two Letters may be later reworkings of an original letter/letters by Shem'on.

29. ELIAS (W; fl. mid 6th cent.). Author of the Life of John, bishop of Tella [LT], addressed to his spiritual brethren Mar Sergius and Mar Paul.

30\*. DANIEL of SALAH (W; fl. mid 6th cent.). Author of an extensive and important commentary on the Psalms, only small extracts of which have so far been published.

31\*. CYRUS of EDESSA (E; fl. 2nd quarter of 6th cent.). Since he was known as 'of Edessa' he was probably born at Edessa. He was a disciple of Mar Aba (Catholicos 540-552) during the time Mar Aba taught at the School of Nisibis (c.533/8). He taught at the School of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and became the director there. Subsequently, after Mar Aba's death, he founded a monastery-school at Hirta (al-Hira). He is the author of six 'Explanations' of the main dominical commemorations [ET] (the Fast, Pascha, the Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost).

32. THOMAS of EDESSA (E; fl. 2nd quarter of 6th cent.). Pupil of Mar Aba and successor to him as a teacher at the School of Nisibis. His Expositions of the Feasts of the Nativity and of Epiphany survive (only the former has been edited in full).

33. CHRONICLE of EDESSA (W; mid 6th cent.). This chronicle [ET, GT, LT], which may well be based on the local Edessene archives, opens with a famous account of a flood in Edessa in November 201, in the course of which, among other buildings, the sanctuary (haykla) of the church of the Christians' was destroyed. The other entries (AD 540 is the latest) are much shorter, and the

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absence of any mention of Addai is especially to be noted.

34\*. JOHN of EPHESUS (W; c.507-c.588). Born near Amid, he entered the monastery of Mar John Urtaya at Amid at the age of 15. In the 530s he travelled to Antioch, Egypt and Constantinople, and became abbot of the monastery of Mar Mare near Constantinople. He was sent by the emperor Justinian to convert pagans in Asia Minor. About 558 he was consecrated metropolitan of Ephesus by Jacob Baradaeus. During the reign of Justin II he was imprisoned for a time, due to his opposition to the Council of Chalcedon. His two surviving works are of the greatest importance for sixth-century Church history.

- Lives of the Eastern Saints [ET]. This work consists of 58 short pieces on contemporary Syrian Orthodox holy men and women, mostly from the Amid region, and many of whom John had known in person.

- Ecclesiastical History [LT]. This work covered from the time of Julius Caesar up to 588, presumably shortly before his death. It was arranged in three books, of which only the third is preserved complete [ET]. Book I, covering up to 449 is completely lost; for Book II, covering 449-571, there is an extensive adaptation, forming the third part of the Chronicle of Zuqnin (= 69 below), as well as a few fragments of the original work.

35. PETER of KALLINIKOS (W; d.591). Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch (581-591). He appears to have written both in Syriac and in Greek; one work definitely written in Syriac is a verse memra on the Crucifixion [ET], and at least one [ET] of his seven letters that survive (in part) was also written in Syriac. His other letters, and three theological treatises, all of which survive only in Syriac translation, were all originally written in Greek: these are: a Treatise against Proba and John Barbur; the extensive work in three books against Damian, Patriarch of Alexandria, [ET] (books

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I and II.1-5 are lost); and a Treatise against the Tritheists [ET].

36\*. Ps.ZACHARIAS RHETOR (W; late 6th cent.). This unknown author of an important Ecclesiastical History incorporated into Books 3-6 of his work an adapted translation of part of an Ecclesiastical History by the Greek writer Zacharias Rhetor [ET for Books 3-12]. Books 1-2 contain (among other things) Syriac translations of the History of Joseph and Aseneth, the Acts of St Silvester of Rome, the Finding of the relics of St Stephen, the Legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, and the Letter of Proclus to the Armenians. Books 3-6 (based on Zacharias) cover the years 450-491; Books 7-8 cover the reigns of the emperors Anastasius (491-518) and Justin I (518-27), while Books 9-12 concern the reigns of Justinian (527-65) and Justin II up to the year 569 (Book 11 is completely lost, and of Books 10 and 12 only fragments are preserved).

37. AHUDEMMEH (W? 6th cent.). The identity of this Ahudemme, author of some short treatises on anthropology, is uncertain; it is possible, but far from certain, that he is to be identified as the Syrian Orthodox metropolitan of the Orient by that name who died in 575, and whose interesting biography survives [FT]. He must have been living in the Sasanian empire, and his anthropology seems to be more influenced by Iranian than by Greek ideas. Two works are known:

- On the composition of man [FT].

- On man as a microcosm [LT]; this latter work is transmitted with a text of quite different (and probably Greek) origin, by a certain Antipatros.

38. ABRAHAM of NATHPAR (E; second half of 6th cent.). Author of several monastic works, the majority of which remain unpublished.

39. ANONYMOUS LITERATURE (6th cent.).

Mention might be made of the following, all probably belonging to the sixth century;

## Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

(a) Poetry: Much anonymous poetry is likely to belong to the sixth century, e.g. many of the dialogue soghyatha, and a beautiful madrasa on Epiphany [ET].

(b) Prose: Amongst the many anonymous works which probably belong to the sixth century the following might be singled out:

- \*Cave of Treasures [ET]. This is a collection of legendary biblical traditions, addressed to an unknown Nemesius. The work covers from Creation to Pentecost, a period which is allocated 5500 years, with the end of each millennium specifically indicated. Many non-biblical traditions, often of Jewish origin, are included, such as the appearance of Noah's fourth son, Yonton, who is portrayed as the teacher of wisdom to Nimrod. Though some of its sources go back much earlier, it is generally thought to have reached its present form in about the 6th century; the attribution to Ephrem, found in some manuscripts, is certainly incorrect.

- Three Homilies on Epiphany [FT].

- Three Homilies on the Sinful Woman (Luke 7) [FT].

- Homily on the High Priest (Hebr. 5:7) [FT].

- Life of the East Syrian Catholicos and confessor Mar Aba (d.552), and Lives of two East Syrian martyrdom, of Grigor (Piragushnasp) and Yazidpane, both put to death under Khosrau I (531-579). These long accounts are of particular interest for the light they shed on Christianity in the Persian Empire in the sixth century.

- Life of Ahudemme (d.575) [FT], Syrian Orthodox metropolitan of the Orient and 'apostle of the Arabs'.

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(d) 6th/7th cent.

40. BARHADBESHABBA 'ARBAYA (E; fl.c.600). Barhadbeshabba was a professor at the School of Nisibis, originating from Beth 'Arabaye. Modern scholars have usually distinguished him from Barhadbeshabba, bishop of Halwan, though this is by no means certain.

- Ecclesiastical History [FT]. This work, in 32 chapters, is entitled in the single surviving manuscript 'History of the holy Fathers who were persecuted for the sake of truth'. Most of the book deals with, first, the Arian controversy of the fourth century, and then the conflict between Nestorius and Cyril over Christology. Several chapters are in fact short biographies of individual figures, such as Athanasius, Gregory the Wonderworker, Basil, Diodore, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Nestorius. The final two chapters are devoted to Narsai and Abraham (d.569).

41. BARHADBESHABBA of HALWAN. (E; fl. early 7th cent.). He was bishop of Halwan and a signatory of the synod of the Catholicos Gregory in 605; though he is usually distinguished from Barhadbeshabba 'Arbaya, it is possible that they are one and the same person.

- Book of the Cause of the Foundation of the Schools [FT]. The earlier part concerns 'schools' to be found in the Bible and in Classical Greece, the School of Zoroaster, that of Christ 'the Great Teacher' and the Christian Schools of Alexandria and Antioch; the latter part of the work is devoted to the Persian School of Edessa and (especially) the School of Nisibis, up to the time of the controversial head of that school, Hnana (of whom the author approves). The Statutes of the School of Nisibis (496, revised 604) also survive [ET].

42. SHUBHALMARAN (E; fl. late 6th/ early 7th cent.).

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Author of several monastic texts, including one entitled 'the Book of Gifts' [ET in preparation].

43\*. BABAI the GREAT (E; c.551-628). He was born in Beth 'Ainatha in Beth Zabdai, and after receiving his basic education there he studied at the School of Nisibis under Abraham of Beth Rabban. Subsequently he entered the 'Great Monastery' on Mount Izla founded in 571 by Abraham of Kashkar (d.588). After some years he left, to found his own monastery and school in neighbouring Beth Zabdai. In 604 he returned to the Great Monastery, having been appointed superior, in succession to Dadisho'. He was strict in his discipline and carried out a number of reforms; these were not always appreciated and many monks left (Babai's Canons survive). On the death of the Catholicos Gregory in 608/9 no new election to the office of Catholicos was allowed by the shah Khosro II; as a result the Church of the East was administered during the interregnum (609-628) jointly by the archdeacon of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Mar Aba, and by Babai, who was appointed visitor of the monasteries. He died in 628, not long after the death of Khosro II. His surviving works cover Christology, asceticism, hagiography and liturgy:

**Christology:**

- Book of the Union. [LT]. 'On the divinity and humanity (of Christ) and on the prosopon of the union', in 7 books (memre). The seventh book seems originally to have belonged to a separate work.

- Against those who say 'Just as the body and soul are one qnoma, so too God the Word and the Man are one qnoma' [LT].

- An excerpt, to the effect that two natures implies two qnome, is preserved in a later collection of Christological texts [ET].

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### **Asceticism:**

- Commentary on the Centuries of Evagrius [GT].
- Commentary on Mark the Monk's work, *The Spiritual Law* (unpublished).
- Canons for monks [ET].
- Ascetic counsels (unpublished).

### **Hagiography:**

- Life of Giwargis/Mihramgushnasp, martyred in 615, aged 39.
  - Martyrdom of Christina (only the beginning survives).
- (A number of other biographical works are lost).

### **Liturgy:**

- A number of teshbhata attributed to Babai the Great are to be found in the Hudra.

Babai the Great is to be distinguished from his contemporary Babai bar Nisibnaye ('son of Nisibene parents'), who is the author of some liturgical poems and a monastic Letter [ET] transmitted under the name of the Catholicos Baboi.

44\*. MARTYRIUS/SAHDONA. (E; fl. first half of 7th cent.). Born in Halmon, in Beth Nuhadra. His monastic vocation was due to the influence of his mother and a local saintly woman named Shirin. He became a monk at the famous monastery of Beth 'Abe, and c.635/40 was appointed bishop of Beth Garmai. His more Chalcedonian doctrinal position on Christology (advocating one, not two, qnome in the incarnate Christ) came under criticism at a synod and he was deposed, only to be reinstated shortly after, but then once again deposed. Though his Christology is defi-

Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

nitely in the East Syrian strongly dyophysite tradition, his Chalcedonian leanings have resulted in his work being transmitted only in Chalcedonian tradition.

- The Book of Perfection [FT]: this long work is his great masterpiece, and one of the finest products of the East Syrian monastic tradition. The beginning is unfortunately lost. The work falls into two parts. In Part I the first two sections (mostly lost) dealt with the dogmatic foundations of the moral life of Christians, while the third and fourth sections provide an introduction to the 'perfect' (i.e. monastic) life, both cenobitic and solitary. Part II, in 14 chapters, is devoted to the individual virtues. The strong biblical basis of the work is very noticeable, and it contains an exceptionally large number of biblical quotations.

- Five Letters [FT].

- Maxims on Wisdom [FT].

45. ISHO'YAHB II (E; d.646). Catholicos of the Church of the East from 628-646, and author of a Letter to a certain Rabban Abraham on 'How we should confess the single prosopon of Christ' [FT].

46. JOHN of the SEDRE (W; d.648). Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch (630/1-648). John acquired his epithet 'of the Sedre' (d-Sedraw(hy)) from having composed liturgical prayers known as 'sedre' (he may even have introduced the genre himself). Besides the sedre (only a few of which can definitely be ascribed to him) John has left the following works:

- Two 'plerophoriai' [GT], or doctrinal polemics; one of these is directed against the followers of Julian of Halicarnassus (and contains an extensive florilegium, or anthology of short patristic excerpts), and the other is against the dyophysites.



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- Discourse on the Myron [GT].
- An Anaphora [GT].
- A Letter, describing a dialogue with an unnamed Muslim emir [FT]. This interfaith dialogue is said to have taken place on Sunday May 9th of an unnamed year; both 639 and 644 have been suggested, and if either of these is correct, this represents by far the earliest Muslim-Christian dialogue; it is possible, however, that the work belongs rather later than John's time.

47. MARUTHA (W; d.649). Born near Balad, he studied for ten years at the monastery of Mar Zakkai, Kallinikos; later he was connected with the monastery of Mar Mattai, and was appointed Maphrian of Tagrit c.628/9. His Life [FT] was written by his successor as Maphrian, Denha (d.660), who lists his writings, only some of which survive:

- Homily on the Blessing of the Water at Epiphany [ET].
- An account of the 'Nestorianisation' of the Church of Persia, preserved in Michael the Syrian's Chronicle [FT].
- An anaphora and some prayers are also attributed to him.

48. GREGORY OF CYPRUS (E; first half 7th cent.). Little is known of this Persian monk from Susiana who spent some time in Cyprus before returning to a monastery on Mount Izla. Of his three Letters and seven treatises on the monastic life only the treatise entitled 'On holy contemplation (theoria), which is translated in Syriac as "divine vision"' has been so far published [LT].

#### 49. ANONYMOUS LITERATURE (early 7th cent.).

- Verse homily on Alexander the Great [ET, GT]; this survives in several somewhat different forms, and is sometimes wrongly attributed to Jacob of Serugh, but in fact it must be a product of

north Mesopotamia and belong to c.629/30, shortly after Heraclius' successful campaigns into the Sasanian Empire, in the course of which he recovered the relics of the Cross (which had been taken by the Persians when they captured Jerusalem in 614).

- Anonymous hagiographical texts from this period include the Life of the East Syrian Catholicos Sabrisho' (d.604) and the Life of Febronia of Nisibis [ET].

## D. MID SEVENTH TO THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Although with hindsight the Arab invasions represent a fundamental political break in the history of Western Asia, there is nevertheless very much a sense of continuity in Syriac writers of the period.

### (a) Second half 7th cent.

50. SEVERUS SEBOKHT (W; d.666/7). Bishop of the monastery of Qenneshre, and one of the most learned men of his time in the fields of astronomy and philosophy. Several works of his in both these fields survive, notably treatises on the Astrolabe and on the Constellations, letters on points of logic addressed to Aitalaha of Nineveh and to a periodeutes Yaunan, and a treatise on Syllogisms (written in 638); he also translated from Middle Persian a compendium on logic written by Paul the Persian for the Persian shah Khosro I (d.579).

51. GABRIEL of QATAR (E; fl.mid 7th cent.). Author of an important commentary on the liturgy [part ET].

52. ABRAHAM bar LIPEH of QATAR (E; fl. mid 7th cent.). Author of a short commentary on the liturgical Offices [LT].

53. ANONYMOUS (E; third quarter of 7th century). Un-

known author of the Khuzistan Chronicle [LT; ET in preparation], covering the end of the Sasanian period and the beginnings of the Arab conquests. It has been suggested that the author of most of it is Elijah, bishop of Merv.

54\*. ISHO'YAHB III (E; d.659). Son of Bastomag of Kuplana (on the Greater Zab), a prominent landowner. He became a monk at the nearby monastery of Beth 'Abe, and c.627 was appointed bishop of Nineveh. Some ten years later he was raised to metropolitan of Arbela, and in 649 he was appointed Catholicos. Isho'yahb is credited with extensive liturgical reforms, and among other things he limited the number of anaphoras in use to the current three (the Apostles Addai and Mari, Theodore, and Nestorius).

- Letters [LT]. The extensive collection of 106 Letters provide a great deal of information on the life of the Church of the East at a critical time in its history, under the early years of Arab rule. In the manuscripts the letters are divided into three groups: those written while he was bishop (52), those from the time when he was metropolitan (32), and those belonging to his office as Catholicos (22); in some cases, however, the allocation is certainly incorrect.

- Life of Isho'sabran, a martyr from the last years of the Sasanian Empire.

55\*. ISAAC of NINEVEH (ISAAC the SYRIAN). (E; fl. end 7th century). Born and educated in Beth Qatraye, he became a monk and during the catholicosate of George (661-680/1) he was consecrated bishop of Nineveh (Mosul); five months later he resigned and retired as a solitary to the mountains of Khuzistan, where he was associated with the monastery of Rabban Shabur. Through the Greek translation of the 'First Part' of his works he has proved to be the most influential of all Syriac monastic writers, and he continues to exert a strong influence in monastic circles in the twentieth century, especially on Mount Athos and in the Egyptian desert

monasteries. The following are his surviving works:

- 'The First Part' [ET]: this is a collection of 82 discourses of varying length and character (a few are in the form of questions and answers or are letters). Most of these discourses were translated into Greek in the Chalcedonian monastery of St Saba in Palestine probably in the eighth century (the translators' names are known: Abramios and Patrikios). For some unexplained reason, five other texts by two other Syriac writers were also included in this translation under Isaac's name: four of these are by John Saba (John of Dalyatha), and one is an abbreviated form of Philoxenos' Letter to Patrikios). Arabic translations were made from both the Syriac and from the Greek; the Greek was the source of many other translations, including Georgian and Slavonic in the Middle Ages, and numerous other languages in modern times.

- 'The Second Part' [IT + ET]: this contains 42 texts, of which the third consists of four 'Centuries' of Kephalaia (or 'Headings') on spiritual knowledge. Though there is evidence that this Second Part was read in Chalcedonian monastic circles, it was never translated into Greek, and indeed it was only in recent years that a complete manuscript of the Syriac original has come to light.

- 'Book of Grace' [ET of excerpts]: it is uncertain whether this work (not yet published) is really by Isaac: it is quite possible that it is by his contemporary Shem'on the Graceful.

56. SHEM'ON the GRACEFUL (Shem'on d-Taybutteh; E; late 7th century): He gained fame as a medical doctor in the time of the Catholicos Hnanisho' (680-700); He subsequently became a monk and was a disciple of Rabban Shabur. A number of short writings on the spiritual life survive [part ET, IT]. Among the topics he covers are: the withdrawal of grace as a result of error; the three noetic altars according to the teaching of the Fathers; the faculties of the inner person, and their working; different kinds of



prayer; the structure of the heart and its workings (containing a physical description as well).

57. DADISHO' (E; late 7th cent.). Like Isaac, Dadisho' originated from Beth Qatrane, and was later connected with the Monastery of Rabban Shabur. His surviving works include:

- Commentary on the Asceticon of Abba Isaiah [FT].
- Commentary on the Paradise of the Egyptian Fathers, compiled by 'Enanisho' (unpublished except for a few excerpts).
- On the Solitude of the Seven Weeks [ET]. This deals with the theme of stillness (hesychia) during solitary retreats lasting seven weeks.
- Various other shorter texts on the spiritual life [ET].

58. JOHN/IOHANNAN bar PENKAYE (E; late 7th cent.). His epithet indicates that his parents were from Fenek, on the Tigris (E. of Tur 'Abdin). He was a monk, first of the monastery of Mar John of Kamul, and then of the monastery of Mar Bassima. Later writers confused him with John Saba/John of Dalyatha. Several works of his survive (for the large part unedited); of these the most important is:

- Ktaba d-rish melle, or summary history of the world, in 15 books (ET, FT of Book 15). The first four books cover from creation to Herod the Great; book 5 is on demons; 6-8 are largely on typology in the Old Testament; book 9 concerns cults of pagan peoples (with some important information on Zoroastrianism); 10-13 are devoted to the life of Christ and of his disciples; book 14 covers the history of the Church up to the Arab conquests, while the final book concerns the last decades of the seventh century (for which period it constitutes a rare contemporary local source).

59. ANONYMOUS (Pseudo-Methodius), Apocalypse [ET,

GT]. This immensely influential apocalypse was probably composed c.691 in north Mesopotamia; it was soon translated into Greek, and then into Latin, where it had a great influence on other apocalyptic writings. Within a brief space it compasses from creation to the writer's present time when he sees the Ishmaelites (i.e. Arabs) as heralding the advent of the last times; it is at this point that the apocalypse proper commences, dealing with the last Roman (Byzantine) emperor, the advent of the 'son of perdition', and the final victory over him as the Cross ascends to heaven, together with the imperial crown. The work makes use of a number of earlier Syriac works, notably the Cave of Treasures, the 'Julian Romance' and the poem on Alexander.

## 60. HAGIOGRAPHY

- Life of Rabban bar 'Idta (E; d.612). A prose Life by John the Persian (third quarter of 7th cent.) is known only in a verse resume of the 11th cent.[ET].

- Life of Rabban Hormizd (E; 6th/7th cent.). A prose life is attributed to a monk Shem'on (7th cent.) [ET]; there are also two much later verse lives.

- Life of Maximus the Confessor (W; d.662). A hostile monothelite Life [ET] of this dyothelete confessor was probably produced within a few decades of Maximus' death; according to this, Maximus originated from Palestine, and not Constantinople (as stated in the Greek Life).

## (b) 7th/8th cent.

61\*. JACOB of EDESSA (W; c.640 - 5 vi 708). Born at 'En Deba in the Antioch region, he studied first under Severos Sebokht at the monastery of Qenneshre on the Euphrates, and then in Alexandria. He was appointed bishop of Edessa c.684, but resigned

owing to the the lax attitude of the hierarchy concerning the observance of the canons. He retired first to a monastery at Kaisum (near Samosata), but was subsequently invited to the monastery of Eusebona where he taught Greek and other subjects for 11 years. The presence there of a group of monks hostile to Greek studies led eventually to his departure for the monastery of Tell 'Ada, where he spent 9 years, during which he worked on his revision of the Syriac Old Testament. On the death of bishop Habbib, his successor in the see of Edessa, Jacob returned to Edessa again as bishop, but 4 months later, on a visit to Tell 'Ada to collect his books, he died. His surviving works are:

- Commentary on the Hexaemeron (six days of creation) [LT]. This learned work, incorporating a great deal of scientific materials, was left unfinished at his death, but was completed by George, bishop of the Arab tribes.

- Scholia on the Old Testament [part ET].

- Liturgical revisions: these include the anaphora of James, the baptismal rite attributed to Severus, and the consecration of the water at Epiphany.

- Exposition of the Liturgy.

- Treatise on the Myron [ET].

- Canons, often in the form of questions and answers. [part ET].

- Chronicle; only fragments survive. Jacob covered up to 691/2, and a later hand supplemented up to 709/10. [LT].

- Letters, on a wide variety of learned subjects. A group of seventeen are addressed to John the Stylite of Litarba.

- A philosophical Enchiridion, or handbook of philosophical terms.

- A Grammar, of which only fragments survive. Jacob was the deviser of a predecessor of the present West Syrian system of vowel signs.

- An apologia against the Chalcedonian clergy of Harran (written while he was still a deacon).

- Some verse letters, two of which are addressed to a certain Qurisona.

Jacob was also a translator and careful reviser of earlier translations. His translations include the Testamentum Domini, the Acts of the Council of Carthage in 256 (Jacob's translation is dated 686/7), and the History of the Rechabites. His revisions of earlier translation cover Severus' Cathedral Homilies (in 700/1), and Hymns (often misleadingly know as the 'Octoechos'), Aristotle's Categories, and several books of the Old Testament; for the last he combined elements of the Peshitta, Syro-Hexapla, and at the same time made use of some Greek manuscripts.

62\*.GEORGE, bishop of the ARAB TRIBES (W; d. Feb. 724). George was a disciple of Athanasius II, and became Syrian Orthodox bishop of the Christian Arab Tribes in 686. He is the last representative of the Syrian Orthodox scholar bishops of the seventh century who were well grounded in Greek scientific and philosophical studies. His surviving works consist of the following:

- the completion of Book 7 of Jacob of Edessa's Commentary on the Six Days of Creation (Hexaemeron), which Jacob had left unfinished at his death. [LT].

- a revised translation, accompanied by introductions and commentaries, of the earlier books of Aristotle's logical works (the Organon).

- scholia on the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus.

## 8th Century

- a commentary on the liturgy (comprising baptism and the eucharist [ET]; and the myron [GT]).

- a collection of letters. These are of great interest and deal with a variety of topics, among which are: the identity of Aphrahat, and his views on the human soul and spirit; chronological and astronomical matters; difficult passages in the letters of Jacob of Edessa. [GT].

- a verse homily (memra) on Severus of Antioch [ET]. A number of other memre are attributed to George, but there is uncertainty concerning their authenticity (the one on the myron is also attributed to Jacob of Serugh in some manuscripts).

### (c) 8th cent.

63. ANONYMOUS author of 'Diyarbekir Commentary' (E; early 8th cent.?). A manuscript once in Diyarbekir contains an important anonymous commentary on Genesis and Exodus 1-9 [FT].

64. SERGIUS the STYLITE of Gusit (W; early 8th cent.). Author of an apologetic treatise against the Jews [ET].

65. ELIA (W; first half 8th cent.). Author of a Letter, addressed to Leo of Harran [LT], setting out in 12 sections the reasons why he left the Chalcedonians and became Syrian Orthodox.

66\*. JOHN of DALYATHA (JOHN SABA). (E; fl. mid 8th cent.). There has been considerable confusion over the identity of this monastic writer, but it now appears that John of Dalyatha is the same person as John Saba (the Elder), but quite different from John of Phenek. He seems to be born in N. Iraq and became a monk in the region of Mount Qardu (where Noah's Ark landed, according to the Peshitta, following Jewish tradition). His epithet 'of Dalyatha (the vine tendrils)' probably derives from the name of.

## Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

his monastery. Nothing is known of the details of his life, but his writings indicate that he was someone with a profound experience of the mystical life. Four short texts by him were translated into Greek along with the works of Isaac of Nineveh and so circulate in Greek (and dependent translations) under Isaac's name.

- Letters [FT]: variously numbered as 48 or 51.

- Discourses, or Homilies: again, variously numbered as 25 or 28.

- Kephalaia, or Headings on Spiritual Knowledge.

Only the first of these three groups of texts has so far been published.

67\*. JOSEPH HAZZAYA (the SEER). (E; fl. mid 8th cent.). His parents were Zoroastrians. At the age of seven he was taken captive in a raid and sold as a slave, first to an Arab in Sinjar, and then to a Christian in the Qardu area; there, impressed by the life of the monks at the monastery of John of Kamul, he sought baptism, and then, being liberated by his owner, he became a monk in Beth Nuhadra. After a period living as a solitary, he was made superior of the monastery of Mar Bassima in the Qardu region for a while, after which he again spent time as a solitary, but was then again made superior of a monastery (that of Rabban Bokhtisho'). His brother also converted to Christianity, with the name 'Abdisho', and many of Joseph's writings were transmitted under his brother's name. In his Catalogue of Syriac writers 'Abdisho' of Nisibis mentions numerous works by Joseph, but only a few have survived, of which the following have been published):

- Letter on the Three Degrees of the Spiritual Life [ET, FT]. This schematic work, which survives in a longer and a shorter form, has often been attributed to Philoxenus of Mabbug in the manuscripts, but cannot possibly belong to that writer, and Joseph seems most likely to be its true author.

## 8th Century

- Shorter texts on different topics of the Spiritual life [ET].

68. ABRAHAM BAR DASHANDAD, 'the Lame' (E; fl. mid 8th cent.). Originating from Beth Sayyade, he became head of the School of Bashosh, later moving to Marga, and then Mosul at the Monastery of Mar Gabriel (later, thanks to his fame, known as 'of Mar Abraham and Mar Gabriel'). He taught both Timothy I and Isho' bar Nun. He is author of a monastic letter addressed to his younger brother, John [ET].

69\*. ANONYMOUS author of the Zuqnin Chronicle (W; fl. c. 776). An unknown monk of the monastery of Zuqnin (near Amid) was the author of an important world Chronicle (sometimes known as the Chronicle of Ps. Dionysius of Tel-Mahre) [LT + FT]. The earlier parts of the work draw on many different sources; thus for the biblical period the author makes use notably of the Syriac translation of Eusebius' Chronicle and an intriguing legend about the origin of the Magi; for the years 495-507 a local Edessene chronicle (usually known today as the Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite [ET; = 25 above]) is incorporated wholesale; while for the sixth century much is based closely on the lost second part of John of Ephesus' Ecclesiastical History [ET; = 34 above]. For the eighth century the author draws considerably on his own knowledge and experience of events [FT; ET forthcoming].

70\*. THEODORE bar KONI (E; late eighth cent.). Teacher at the School of Kashkar in Beth 'Aramaye (near the Arab city of al-Wasit). A single work of his survives:

- 'Book of the Scholion' [FT], completed in 792. This consists of 11 memre, 1-9 concern specific questions to do with the Old Testament (1-5) and New Testament (6-9), arranged according to the sequence of the books; included within these memre are a number of sections on philosophical terms, so that the work as a whole serves as a kind of introductory text book on theology and philoso-

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phy, taking the Bible as its basis. Memre 10 and 11 are probably later additions, 10 being an apology for Christianity directed towards Muslims, while 11 is an account of different heresies (incorporated in this are some important quotations from Mandaean religious texts). The work comes down in two recensions (which may represent two successive editions going back to the author).

## (d) 8th/9th cent.

71\* TIMOTHY I. (E; c. 728 - 823). Born in Hazza (in Adiabene), 12 kms SW of Arbela. His education was put in the hands of his father's brother, George, bishop of Beth Baghash: he was sent to the famous school at Bashosh run by Abraham bar Dashandad, and when Abraham moved first to Marga and then to the monastery of Mar Gabriel in Mosul, Timothy followed him. Probably between 766 and 770 he was consecrated bishop of Beth Baghash. After the death of the Catholicos Hnanisho' in 778/9 there were disputes over the succession, and eventually Timothy was elected (779) and consecrated Catholicos (7th May 780). Some opposition remained, but in the end reconciliation with the aggrieved parties was achieved (by c. 782). Timothy's extensive collection of Letters provides some vivid insights into the life of the Church of the East at the time of some of the most famous Abbasid caliphs.

- 59 Letters are preserved ('Abdisho' mentions the number of 200). [LT for 1-39]; Letters 42, 44-46, 49-58 remain unpublished]. The collection is not in chronological order. The majority are addressed to his friend and former fellow student, Sergius: 14-20, 28-33, 37-40, 44 and 49 are addressed to him as 'Sergius, priest and doctor', while for 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 21-25, 46-48, 52-55, 57-59 Sergius is styled 'metropolitan of Elam'. The contents of these may be approximately classified as follows:

- ecclesiastical affairs: 3-13, 15-17, 21-25, 27-32, 35, 44-47, 49-58.

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- availability of manuscripts of translations from Greek patristic writers: 3, 16-20, 22, 24, 33, 37-39, 43, 47, 49.

- the Hexapla, and the discovery of old Hebrew biblical manuscripts near Jericho, among which are non-canonical Psalms of David [GT]. (Four of these were translated into Syriac and survive; two of them correspond to non-canonical psalms in the Psalms scroll of Qumran Cave XI): 47.

- new translations from Greek into Syriac of Greek philosophical texts (esp. Aristotle, Topics): 43, 48 [ET].

- a discussion with an Aristotelian philosopher at the caliph's court: 40 [FT].

- a discussion with the caliph al-Mahdi (775-85), in the form of a defence of Christianity [ET, FT].

- on theological topics: 34, 39, 41 (addressed to the monks of Mar Maron, [FT]), 42.

- on ecumenical relations (doctrines held in common, primacy, the five patriarchal sees): 26.

- various: 1 (baptism), 2 (the soul), 14 (letter of consolation), 19 (a new grammar), 36 (miscellaneous topics).

- A collection of 48 Canons [LT GT]. Timothy may also have been responsible for collecting together the texts of earlier synods and their canons into the collection known today as the Synodicon Orientale.

72\*. ISHO' BAR NUN. (E; c.744 - 1 Apr 828). Born at Bet Gabbare on the river Tigris, near Mosul. He studied (along with Timothy I) under Abraham bar Dashandad. Subsequently he briefly taught at the School in Seleucia Ctesiphon, but then left to become a monk at the monastery of Mar Abraham on the mountain of Izla; later he was active in Baghdad, and then for a long period in Mosul.

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It is uncertain whether he is to be identified as the Isho'dad bar Nun, bishop of Ram Hormizd, mentioned in Timothy's Letters. He was consecrated Catholicos on 6 July 823. His surviving works (only a few of which have been published) are:

- Select Questions on the Old and New Testaments [ET for some of those on Pentateuch]. This may be just a selection from a larger work now lost.

- Juridical decisions concerning marriage, inheritance etc. [GT].

- A grammatical work.

- Consolatory homilies (fragments only).

- Letters to the periodeutes Ishaq of Beth Qatraye, and to the deacon Makarios, on liturgical matters.

- Four questions on works of the Solitary Fathers.

#### (e) 9th cent.

73\*. JOB of EDESSA (E; fl. early 9th cent.). He is known to have been born in Edessa, and to have been a contemporary of the Catholicos Timothy I (d.823). Hunayn ibn Ishaq mentions him as a translator into Syriac of works by Galen. The two works by Job that survive are both scientific in character:

- The Book of Treasures [ET], in six books, covering metaphysics, psychology, physiology, medicine, chemistry, physics, mathematics, meteorology and astronomy.

- On Canine Hydrophobia (unpublished).

In the course of the Book of Treasures Job mentions various other works that he had written, on cosmology, the soul, syllogisms, the senses, medicine (on urine), and the Faith. None of these,

9th Century  
however, survive.

74\*. JOHN (IWANNIS) of DARA. (W; flourished first half of 9th cent.). Nothing is known of his life, except that the Patriarch Dionysius of Tellmahre (d.845) dedicated his Ecclesiastical History (lost) to him. Only the first of the works listed below has been published so far.

- Commentary on the Liturgy, in four books [FT].
- On the Soul.
- On the Resurrection of bodies.
- On Priesthood.
- Commentary on the Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchies by Dionysius the Areopagite.
- On Paradise.
- On Creation.
- Against heretics.
- The Resurrection of Christ.
- On Pentecost.
- On the Finding of the Cross.
- On the Divine Economy.
- On Demons.
- On the Doctrine of the Christians.

75\*. ISHO'DAD of MERV (E; fl. mid 9th cent.). Bishop of Hdatta, who was a candidate for the Catholicosate in 852. He is the author of one of the most extensive commentaries on the entire Bible, Old [FT] and New Testaments [ET], drawing together much older material. For the Old Testament part he is the first East Syr-

Brief outline of Syr. Lit.  
ian writer to draw on readings of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, to be found in the margin of the Syrohexapla.

76. NONNUS (W; fl. mid 9th cent.). Archdeacon of Nisibis; his chief fame lay in his successfully combating the Chalcedonian teaching of Theodore Abu Qurra at the court of the Armenian Bagratid king Ashot. At Ashot's request he wrote a Commentary on John (in Arabic, but based on Syriac sources) which was then translated into Armenian (in which it alone survives). Four other theological works, all written in Syriac, are extant:

- Apologetic treatise [LT], responding to three questions concerning the Trinity and Incarnation (the standpoint of the questioner is unclear).

- A treatise against Thomas of Marga (on whom see 79 below), in 4 books.

- Two letters.

Only the first of these texts has been published.

77\*. ANTON of TAGRIT (W; probably 9th cent.). Barhebraeus supposed that Anton (whom he calls a monk) was a contemporary of the patriarch Dionysius of Tell Mahre (d.22 Aug. 845), but it seems that he had nothing beyond oral tradition to go on for this; nevertheless, a ninth-century date seems quite likely. His surviving works are:

- On the Science of Rhetoric, in five books [ET for Book 5]. Anton's states that his aim in writing this important work was to refute those 'who call our Syriac language meagre, narrow, stunted and feeble, and who designate our literature as poor and niggardly'. So far, only Book 5, on metres and on rhetorical figures, has been published.

- On Providence (unpublished).



#### 9th Century

- On the Myron (unpublished).
- Consolatory letters (unpublished).
- Prayers. Some of these are in verse, and probably constitute one of the earliest pieces of evidence for the use of rhyme.

78\*. ANONYMOUS (Ps. George of Arbela) (E; 9th cent.?). The name and date of the author of an extensive and important Commentary on the East Syrian Liturgical rites [LT] are unknown; he is certainly writing after Abraham bar Lipeh (7th cent.; = 52, above), whom he quotes, and Isho'dad III's liturgical reforms; on the other hand, he is certainly not the tenth-century George, metropolitan of Mosul and Arbela, with whom Assemani identified him. The work is divided into 7 books; these cover: 1, the liturgical year; 2, various liturgical practices (e.g. division of Psalter, use of the Our Father in different services, on the 'onyata); 3, on Lilya; on provisions for specific parts of the liturgical year; 4, on the (eucharistic) Mysteries; 5, on baptism; 6, on the place of Quddash 'idta (consecration of the church) at the beginning of the liturgical year, and on various liturgical practices; 7, on funeral and marriage rites.

79\*. THOMAS, bishop of MARGA (E; fl. mid 9th cent.)

- Book of Superiors (Abbots) [ET]. This extensive work for the large part concerns figures connected with his own monastery of Beth 'Abe. Of the present six books, Book 6 is a separate earlier work, mainly concerned with the monastery of Rabban Cyprian.

80. ISHO'DNAH (E; fl. c.860). Metropolitan of Prat d-Maishan (Basra).

- 'Book of Chastity', or 'History of the founders of monasteries in the realms of the Persians and the Arabs' [FT]. This is a collection of 140 short notices concerning monastic figures, covering from Mar Augen (reputedly fourth century) to the mid ninth century.

81. ANONYMOUS (E; late 9th cent.) author of commentary on Old and New Testaments, of which only the section covering Gen.1-18 has so far been published [ET].

82\*. MOSHE BAR KEPHA (W; b. c.833; d.12 Feb. 903). He was born in Balad (modern Eski Mosul) in N Iraq, and educated at the Monastery of Mar Sargis (known as 'the Hanging Monastery') in the 'Dry Mountain' some 15 kms NE of Balad. c.863 he was made bishop of Beth Raman, Beth Kiyonaye and Mosul (i.e. his diocese covered the area along the Tigris S of Mosul and N of Tagrit). An extensive number of writings survive, in three main fields, exegesis, theology, and liturgy; many of these have not yet been published.

#### Exegetical:

- Commentary on the Six Days of Creation (Hexaemeron), in 5 books. [Only parts of the Syriac text have been published, but there is a complete GT].

- Commentary on Paradise, in 3 books. (This was one of the earliest Syriac texts to be studied by European scholars, and was translated into Latin by Andreas Masius in 1569; the Syriac text remains unpublished). [LT].

- Introduction to the Psalter. [FT].

- Commentary on Matthew, Luke, John, Acts and the Pauline Epistles. [Only those on John and on Romans have so far been published, with GT].

Theological (Syriac texts all unpublished):

- On the Soul (41 chapters). [GT only].
- On Resurrection (34 chapters).
- On the creation of angels (45 chapters).

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- On the hierarchy of angels (16 chapters).
- On predestination and free will.
- On priesthood (this work is also attributed to John of Dara).

Liturgical (only the Syriac texts of the second, third, and a few of the Homilies are published):

- Commentary on the baptismal rite. [ET].
- Commentary on the eucharistic liturgy. [ET].
- Commentary on the consecration of the myron. [GT].
- Commentary on the ordination rites (for bishops, priests, deacons). [LT].
- Commentary on the clothing of monks.
- Commentary on rite for the dedication of a church.
- Commentary on the funeral rites.
- Commentary on the heavenly and earthly priesthood.
- An instruction to the members of the Church.
- A collection of 38 homilies. [ET, FT in part].
- A Book on the Causes of the Feasts.

Several works are known to be lost: a Church History, a commentary on Gregory of Nazianzus' Homilies, a work against heresies, and a commentary on Aristotle's Categories (an excerpt of the last survives).

#### (f) 10th cent.

83. ELIJAH of ANBAR (E; fl. first half of 10th cent.). Bishop of Anbar (Peroz Shabur), and author of an extensive work in verse entitled *Ktaba d-durrasha* (Book of Instruction), or Book of Centuries, in three parts, consisting of 10 memre in all [GT of Part I].

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The content, which could be described as gnomic, is strongly influenced by the Dionysian Corpus.

84\*. ANONYMOUS author (W; 10th cent.?) of the Book of the Cause of Causes [GT]. The author identifies himself as a bishop of Edessa who resigned and retired to a contemplative life; as a result he has sometimes been identified as Jacob of Edessa, but this is impossible, as the author clearly lived several centuries later. The work seeks to be 'a book in common for all peoples under heaven, on knowledge of truth, how it is known'; it deals with wide theological problems of the relationship between God and humanity, and, in a remarkable attempt at inter-faith dialogue, seeks to present specifically Christian doctrines, such as the Trinity, in a way that might be acceptable to Jews and Muslims.

85. EMMANUEL bar SHAHHARE (E; fl. second half 10th cent.). Author of an extensive unpublished verse commentary on the Hexaemeron (Six days of Creation).

#### (g) 11th cent.

86. ELIJAH of NISIBIS (E; 11 Feb 975 - 18 July 1046). Born at Shenna (hence sometimes known as Elia bar Shinaya), he was ordained priest in 994, and studied at the monastery of Mar Michael, near Mosul. In 1002 he was appointed bishop of Beth Nuhadra, and in 1008 as Metropolitan of Nisibis. He wrote primarily in Arabic, but used Syriac in composing a number of liturgical prayers (still in use). Both Syriac and Arabic feature in two works:

- Chronography [FT, LT]. This important work contains short excerpts from many earlier sources otherwise lost; much of it is taken up with elaborate tables.

- An Arabic-Syriac glossary, entitled 'The Interpreter', to facilitate the teaching of Syriac.



12th Century  
(h) 12th cent.

87\*. DIONYSIUS BAR SALIBI (W; d.1171). He was probably born in Melitene (Malatya), a meeting point for Greek and Syriac culture in the late 12th century, his baptismal name being Jacob. He was appointed bishop of Mar'ash (Germanikia), with the episcopal name Dionysius, in 1148. After the accession of Michael I to the patriarchate (1166) he became metropolitan of Amid. Known to his contemporaries as 'the eloquent doctor, the star of his generation and a philoponos like Jacob of Edessa', he was one of the most learned and voluminous Syrian Orthodox writers of the twelfth century. His main surviving works are:

- Commentary on the Old Testament (mostly unpublished).
- Commentary on the New Testament [LT].

Dionysius bar Salibi was the first Syrian Orthodox to provide a commentary on the entire Bible; he draws on a great variety of earlier commenatators, both Greek (in Syriac translation) and Syriac (including commentators of the Church of the East). Much of the commentary on the Old Testament is arranged in two sections, factual or material (su'rana'it), and spiritual (ruhana'it).

- Commentary on the Liturgical Offices [LT].
- Commentary on the Baptismal liturgy (unpublished).
- Three anaphoras.
- Polemical works against the Muslims (unpublished), Jews, Armenians [ET], Melkites [ET], and Nestorians (unpublished).
- Commentary on Evagrius' Centuries.
- Commenatry on Porphyry's Eisagoge and on Aristotle's Logical works, or Organon (completed in 1148; unpublished).
- Penitential Canons [LT].

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Among works by Dionysius bar Salibi which have been lost are: a chronicle, a treatise on Providence, a compendium of theology, commentaries on the works of various Greek Fathers, letters and poems.

88. ELIJAH III ABU HALIM (E; d. 12 Apr 1190). Bishop of Maipherqat, then metropolitan of Nisibis, and finally Catholicos (1176). He wrote in both Arabic and Syriac, the latter being used for his collection of prayers for the morning Office throughout the liturgical year (manuscripts containing these are simply called 'Abu Halim').

89\*. MICHAEL the GREAT (W; d.1199). Syrian Orthodox Patriarch from 1166-1199. He was born in Melitene, and before being elected Patriarch was Superior of the Monastery of Barsauma in the region of Melitene. Besides revising the Syrian Orthodox Pontifical and editing the Life of Abhai, bishop of Nicaea, he is the author of the most extensive of all Syriac world Chronicles [FT], covering from Creation to his own day. Incorporated into this massive work are many documents not preserved in other sources. For the seventh and early eighth centuries he made considerable use of the lost Ecclesiastical History by one of his predecessors as Patriarch, Dionysius of Tel-Mahre (818 - 22 August 845).

(i) 13th cent.

90. IOHANNAN BAR ZO'BI (E; late 12th/early 13th cent.). Monk of the monastery of Beth Qoqa in Adiabene, and one of the most learned East Syriac writers of his time. Very few of his writings have yet been edited; these include a verse commentary of baptism and the eucharist, and various works on grammar and philosophy, in both prose and verse.

91. SOLOMON of BOSRA (E; fl. early 13th century). Born at Akhlāt on Lake Van at an unknown date, he was already

### 13th Century

metropolitan of Prath d-Maishan, or Basra, in 1222. Although he also wrote a number of smaller works, he is chiefly famous for his compilation of biblical traditions entitled the Book of the Bee [ET].

92. GIWARGIS WARDA (E; fl. first half of 13th cent.). This famous poet, from Arbela, lived in the turbulent period of the Mongol invasions, and several of his poems deal with contemporary events (e.g. On the devastation of Karamlais by the Mongols in 1235/6). Many of his hymns were adopted for liturgical use, and manuscripts containing these are known by the name 'Warda' (Rose). Topics covered are mostly hagiographical or dealing with liturgical feasts. Only 23 of his c.150 poems have so far been published.

93\*. ANONYMOUS (W; fl. first half of 13th cent.). This unknown author of one of the most important and extensive Syriac world Chronicles, running from Creation to c.1234 [LT + FT], probably came from Edessa. The work (which unfortunately contains several gaps) is in two parts, one devoted to ecclesiastical matters, the other to secular. Among the sources he uses for the early biblical period is the Book of Jubilees (not certainly quoted in any other Syriac writer). For the seventh and eighth centuries much use is made of the lost Ecclesiastical History by Dionysius of Tel-Mahre.

94\*. JACOB SEVERUS bar SHAKKO (W; d.1241). Born in Bartella (near Mosul), he studied under the East Syriac scholar Iohannan bar Zo'bi (at the monastery of Beth Qoqe) and under a Muslim scholar in Mosul, Kamal al-Din Musa ibn Yunus (for dialectics and philosophy). He subsequently became bishop of the monastery of Mar Mattai, with the episcopal name Severus. His surviving works are:

- Ktobo d-Simoto, 'Book of Treasures'. This theological compendium is set out in four parts: 1, on the Triune God; 2, on

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the incarnation; 3, on divine providence; and 4, on the creation of the world (covering angels, stars, geography, natural history, etc., ending up with the constitution of the human person and the soul, antichrist, the resurrection of the body, and the last judgement. The work remains unpublished.

- Ktobo d-Dialogu, 'Book of Dialogues'. This is arranged in two books; the first covers: 1, grammar; 2, rhetoric; 3, poetry and metres; 4, eloquence and the richness of the Syriac language. The second book deals with: 1, logic and syllogisms; and 2, philosophy (divided up into five sections: (a) definitions and divisions of philosophy; (b) philosophical life and conduct; (c) physics and physiology; (d) arithmetic, music, geometry, mathematics; and (e) metaphysics and theology). Only excerpts of this work have so far been published.

- Two letters written in verse.

- A symbol of faith.

95\*. BAR 'EBROYO/ABU 'L FARAJ/BARHEBRAEUS (W; 1225/6 - 30 vii 1286). Alongside Ephrem, perhaps the most famous of all Syriac writers. He was born in Melitene and was the son of a doctor Ahron who has been assumed to have been a convert from Judaism (hence the name Barhebraeus); his baptismal name was Yuhanon, but he subsequently took the name Gregorius when he was appointed at a very young age as bishop of Gubos (1246); he later became bishop of Aleppo (1253), and was eventually appointed Maphrian of the East (1264). He died in Maragha (NW Iran). He was a polymath of extraordinarily wide learning in virtually every subject that was studied in his time. He wrote both in Syriac and in Arabic, and had a good knowledge of Greek, Armenian, Persian, and perhaps some of Coptic and Hebrew. In his Ecclesiastical History (II, 431-486) he has left a considerable amount of autobiographical information, and this was supplemented after his death by his brother Barsauma, who also gives a list of his writ-

### 13th Century

ings (another list is to be found in the verse panegyric on Barhebraeus by Dioscorus of Gozarto, [= 98, below]). His extensive surviving writings cover theology, philosophy, ethics, astronomy, grammar, exegesis, liturgy, canon law, history, and much more. Several of his most important works have not yet been published. He draws on Greek, Syriac, Arabic and Persian sources in his various compendia. For several topics he provides works on three different levels, elementary, intermediary and advanced. His most important surviving writings are:

- Mnorat Qudsho, 'Candelabra of the Sanctuary' [FT I-V, VII-XII; GT VI]. This large-scale theological compendium is arranged in 12 books (called 'foundations'), with the following titles:

- I, On knowledge, straightforwardly.
- II, On the nature of the universe.
- III, On theology (i.e. on the Trinity).
- IV, On the incarnation of God the Word.
- V, On knowledge of the heavenly beings, namely the angels.
- VI, On the earthly priesthood.
- VII, On the evil spirits, or demons.
- VIII, On the rational soul.
- IX, On freewill and liberty, and on fate, determinism, and the end.
- X, On the resurrection of the dead.
- XI, On the end, on judgement, and on the reward of the good and the evil.
- XII, On the paradise of Eden.

- Ktobo d-Zalge. This is his medium-size compendium of theology, divided up into ten parts:

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- I, On the Creation in six days.
- II, On theology (i.e. on the Trinity).
- III, On the incarnation.
- IV, On angels.
- V, On evil spirits.
- VI, On the soul.
- VII, On priesthood.
- VIII, On freewill and the end.

IX, On the end of the two worlds, microcosm and macrocosm, and on the beginning of the New World.

X, On Paradise [FT].

- 'Osar Roze, 'Treasure of Mysteries' [ET for Pentateuch and New Testament]. This is more a systematic collection of notes, rather than a commentary, on all the books of the Syriac Bible. There is a strong philological and textual interest.

- Ktobo d-Hudoye, 'Book of Guides' (also known as the Nomocanon) [LT]. This is a collection of Canon Law, arranged thematically for convenience of use. The work is set out in 40 chapters, the earlier ones concerning ecclesiastical matters, and the later ones concerning lay affairs (inheritance, business dealings, interest, irrigation rights, theft, homicide etc.).

- Ktobo d-Itiqon, 'Book of Ethics', with the sub-title 'on excellence of conduct, according to the opinion of the desert fathers and the tested teachers'. The work is set out in four discourses, the first two dealing with exterior knowledge ('the work of the limbs'), the last two with interior knowledge ('the work of the heart'):

I (with 9 chapters), on liturgical prayer, manual work, scrip-

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tural reading, vigils, psalmody, fasts, pilgrimage etc.[FT].

II (with 6 chapters), on foods, marriage and celibacy, the cleansing of the body, the different ages of man, manual work, commerce, and almsgiving.

III (with 12 chapters), 'On the purification of the soul from the base passions'.

IV (with 16 chapters), 'On the adornment of the soul with excellent qualities'. Barhebraeus' main model and source for this work was the *Ihya 'ulum al-din* by al-Ghazali (d.1111).

- Ktobo d-Yawno, 'Book of the Dove' [ET]. This work, in four chapters, describes the various forms of the ascetic life; the fourth chapter contains material based on his own spiritual experiences.

- Commentary on the Book of the Holy Hierotheos (a sixth-century mystical work by Stephen bar Sudhaili).

- Ktobo d-He'wat Hekmto, 'Book of the Cream of Wisdom'. This is a vast encyclopaedia of Aristotelian philosophy, set out in four books:

I, on Logic, in 9 parts, following the order of Aristotle's logical works ('the Organon') as studied from at least the sixth century, i.e. 1, Porphyry's *Eisagoge* or Introduction; 2, Categories; 3, On Interpretation (*Peri hermeneias*); 4, Prior Analytics; 5, *Apodeiktike*, or Posterior Analytics; 6, Topics; 7, Sophistics; 8, Rhetorics; 9, Poetics.

II, on the physical world, in 13 parts.

III, on Metaphysics, in 2 parts.

IV, on practical philosophy (covering Aristotle's Ethics,

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Economics, and Politics; also deals with physiognomy).

Barhebraeus makes considerable use of Ibn Sina's (Avicenna's) *Shifa'*, and (for the fourth book) of al Tusi's *Ahlq-e Nasiri*; he also preserves a number of quotations from Greek writers whose works are otherwise lost. Only excerpts of this important work have so far been published.

- Ktobo da-Swod Sufya [FT], 'Book of the Conversation of wisdom'. This is his middle-sized treatise on logic, the physical world, and philosophy.

- Ktobo d-Tegrat Tegroto, 'Book of the Treatise of Treatises'. This deals with logic, the physical world, and philosophy.

- Ktobo d-Boboto, 'Book of the Pupils (sc. of the eye)'. This is a summary introduction to logic.

- Ecclesiastical History [LT]. This is arranged in two parts, the first dealing with the patriarchs of Antioch and the more westerly area (up to 1285), and the second with the area further east, covering both the Catholicos of the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Maphrians. The work also includes an autobiographical section.

- Chronicle [ET]. This covers, in summary fashion, from Creation to Barhebraeus' own days. He also made an Arabic adaptation of this work for the benefit of a Muslim friend.

- Ktobo d-Semhe, 'Book of Splendours' [GT]. This is Barhebraeus' largest and most important work on grammar.

- Ktobo d-Gramatiqi, 'Book of Grammar'. This is a grammar written in the seven-syllable metre.

- Ktobo d-Balsusyoto, 'Book of Sparks'. This is a short grammar.

- Ktobo d-Suloqo Hawnonoyo [FT], 'Book of intellectual

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ascent'. This work, composed in 1279, deals with astronomy.

- Ktobo d-Tunoye Mgahkone, 'Book of amusing stories' [ET]. This is a collection of short narratives and sayings derived from earlier sources; much use has been made of a work by Abu Sa'd al-Abi (d. c.1030).

- Poems (Mushhoto). Besides the verse grammar, Barhebraeus wrote a considerable number of poems, among which the longest is entitled 'On wisdom'.

- An Anaphora.

## E. FOURTEENTH TO NINETEENTH CENTURIES

### 13th/14th cent.

96\*. 'ABDISHO' BAR BRIKA (E; d. 1318). Bishop of Sinjar and Bet 'Arbaye, and then Metropolitan of Soba (or Nisibis). He wrote in both Arabic and Syriac; his surviving Syriac works are:

- Nomocanon [LT], or collection of synodical canons, arranged thematically.

- Rules of ecclesiastical judgements [LT], designed as a handbook for use in ecclesiastical courts.

- Marganitha, or 'Pearl', with the subtitle 'the Truth of the Faith' [ET]. this short and influential exposition of East Syrian theology was written in 1298.

- Paradise of Eden. This is a collection of 50 poems, first circulated in 1291, but later (1316) provided by the author himself

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with a commentary, seeing that he made use of a large number of rare and obscure words.

- Metrical catalogue of Syriac writers [ET, LT]. This work is an invaluable source of information, especially about lost works by Syriac authors. In the course of this work (arranged chronologically) he mentions a number of his own works which have not come down to us, notably a commentary on the Bible, a work on the dispensation of the life of Christ on earth, and one on heresies and on philosophy.

97. KHAMIS bar QARDAHE (E; late 13th/early 14th cent.). Served as priest in Arbela, and was a prolific poet, writing both religious and secular verse. Among other things he wrote a supplement to Barhebraeus' poem on Wisdom. His liturgical poetry (especially his 'Onyatha) are transmitted in volumes specifically entitled 'Khamis'.

98. DIOSCORUS of GOZARTO (W; late 13th/early 14th cent.). Monk of a monastery in Bartelli, he was consecrated bishop of Gozarto d-Qardu in 1285/6 by Barhebraeus; author of:  
- Verse life of Barhebraeus.

- Anaphora.

99. ANONYMOUS (E). An anonymous writer composed the History of Yahballaha and Rabban Sauma [ET, FT] shortly after the death of Yahballaha III in 1317. This is a vivid account of how two monks from China were sent to the west as emissaries of the Mongol IlKhan, one of whom was elected Catholicos, while the other (Rabban Sauma) journeyed on to Europe. The author was evidently an eyewitness of many of the events related, while for Rabban Sauma's journey to Europe he was able to make use of the latter's diary, which he sometimes reproduces verbatim.

100. TIMOTHY II (E; d.1353). Metropolitan of Mosul,

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and then (in 1318) Catholicos, in succession to Yahballaha

III. - On the ecclesiastical mysteries. The work is in seven chapters: 1, on priesthood; 2, on the consecration of a church; 3, on baptism [ET]; 4, on the Eucharist; 5, on monastic profession; 6, on funeral rites; 7, on betrothal and marriage rites.

## E. 14th-19th CENTURY

A considerable amount of both prose and poetry continued to be written in Syriac during these centuries, but so far the literature of this period has been very little studied by scholars, and only a small number of writings from it have been published. From the 15th century, mention might be made of the priest Isaiah of Bet Sbirina (Tur 'Abdin) and his son Yeshu' (W; d.1492); among the former's poems are several on contemporary events (including the devastations of Timur Leng, d.1407). To the mid 15th century belongs Ishaq Qardahe Sbadnaya (E), author of several acrostic 'Onyata and of a 12-syllable poem on the Divine Economy, accompanied by a prose commentary containing many quotations from old writers. From the end of the 15th century come Mas'ud, also of Tur 'Abdin (W), author of a theological poem entitled 'The Spiritual Ship' [LT]. Three important poets of the turn of the 15th/16th century are the Patriarch Nuh (W; d. 1509), David 'the Phoenician' (W) and Sargis bar Wahle (E), who wrote a verse life of Rabban Hormisd [ET]. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth century saw the beginnings of written literature in Modern Syriac, and several poems in the dialect of Alqosh survive; otherwise, it was not until the nineteenth century and the influence of the American missionary press at Urmiah that Modern Syriac (mainly in the Urmiah dialect) came to be quite widely used as a written language.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several translations into Syriac were made of classics of western spirituality, such as *The Imitation of Christ* attributed to Thomas a Kempis (this

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translation was made by the Maphrian Basil Ishaq Gobeyr (W; d.1721). Two outstanding writers in Syriac from this period are the Chaldean Patriarch Joseph II residing in Amid/Diarbekir (E; d.1731), author of *The Magnet* and *The Shining Mirror* (both widely read in manuscript), and Metropolitan Basileios Shem'un of Tur 'Abdin (W; martyred in 1740), author of a *Book of Theology* (1714), *The Ship of Mysteries* (verse, on theological topics; 1727/9), *The Armour of Thanksgiving and Hope of Faith* (1723, subsequently translated into Arabic), and many homilies and poems; Shem'un also compiled a dictionary based on the much earlier one by Bar Bahlul (late 10th cent.).

## F. TWENTIETH CENTURY

The late 19th century witnessed a considerable revival of literary activity in Syriac. One outstanding figure was T'oma Audo, Chaldean metropolitan of Urmia (E; 1853-1917), who, amongst many other things, was the compiler of an extremely valuable Syriac-Syriac dictionary (1896; reprinted 1985). Other notable figures include the Syrian Catholic Patriarch Rahmani (W; 1848-1929), the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Ephrem Barsaum (W; 1887-1957), and Metropolitan Philoxenos Yuhanon Dolabani (W; 1885-1969); it was Dolabani who translated into Syriac Barsaum's important *History of Syriac Literature* and Paulos Behnam's drama *Theodora*, both of which were originally written in Arabic.

Several writers of the 20th century have used Syriac as a vehicle for secular literature; a pioneer in this field was Na'um Fa'yeq (W; 1868-1930), who founded the periodical *Star of the East* in 1908. A number of translations into Syriac of western secular literature has also been made, such as Bernardin de Saint Pierre's romantic novel *Paul et Virginie*, translated by Paulos Gabriel (W; d.1971) and Ghatta Maqdasi Elyas (W) and published (in 1955)



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under the title Myatruto ('Virtue'), and Racine's play *Athalie* (translated by Abrohom Isu (Baghdad, 1978). More recent translations include Machiavelli's *Prince* (by Gabriel Afram), published in Sweden in 1995. A considerable amount of writing in Classical Syriac, in both prose and verse, continues today, both in the Middle East and (above all) in the Diaspora, now scattered all over the world.

## APPENDIX: CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF AUTHORS (2nd-13th cent.)

Century	
2nd/3rd cent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Peshitta OT</li> <li>*Diatessaron</li> <li>*Old Syriac Gospels</li> <li>*Book of the Laws of the Countries (School of Bardaisan)</li> <li>*Odes of Solomon</li> <li>*Acts of Thomas</li> <li>Melito 'the philosopher'</li> <li>Menander sentences</li> <li>Mara</li> <li>*Ahikar</li> </ul>
4th cent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Aphrahat (fl.337-345)</li> <li>*Ephrem (d.373)</li> <li>*Book of Steps</li> </ul>
5th cent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cyrillona</li> <li>Balai</li> <li>*John the Solitary</li> <li>*Anonymous poetry (soghyatha, memre, madrashe)</li> <li>*Anonymous prose (hagiography): Abraham of Qidun</li> </ul>

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The Man of God (Alexis)  
 Edessan Martyrs (Shmona, Gurya, Habbib)  
 Teaching of Addai  
 Legendary Edessan Martyrs (Barsamya, Sharbel)  
 Euphemia and the Goth  
 Persian Martyrs  
 Symeon the Stylite  
 'Julian Romance'  
 Rabbula  
 Hom. on Abraham and Isaac

5th/6th cent.

\*Narsai (E)  
 \*Jacob of Serugh (W; d.521)  
 Simeon the Potter (W)  
 \*Philoxenus/Aksenoyo (W; d.523)  
 \*'Isaac of Antioch' (W)

6th cent.

Symmachus (W)  
 ANON., Chron. of 'Joshua the Stylite' (W)  
 Stephen bar Sudhaili (W)  
 Sergius of Resh'aina (W; d.536)  
 Simeon of Beth Arsham (W)  
 Elias (W)  
 \*Daniel of Salah (W)  
 \*Cyrus of Edessa (E)  
 Thomas of Edessa (E)  
 ANON, Chron. of Edessa (W)  
 \*John of Ephesus (W)  
 Peter of Kallinikos (W)  
 ANON. Chronicle of Pseudo-Zacharias  
 Ahudemneh (W?)  
 Abraham of Nathpar (E)  
 ANON., \*Cave of Treasures etc.

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- 6th/7th cent. Barhadbeshabba 'Arbaya (E)  
Barhadbeshabba of Halwan (E)  
Shubhalmaran (E)  
\*Babai the Great (E; d.628)  
\*Sahdona/Martyrius (E)  
Isho'yahb II (E; d.646)  
John of the Sedre (W; d.648)  
Marutha (W; d.649)  
Gregory of Cyprus (E)  
ANON., memra on Alexander the Great etc.
- Later 7th cent. Severus Sebokht (W; d.666/7)  
Gabriel Qatraya (E)  
Abraham bar Lipeh (E)  
ANON., Khuzistan Chronicle (E)  
\*Isho'yahb III (E; d.659)  
\*Isaac of Nineveh (E)  
Shem'on the Graceful (E)  
Dadisho' (E)  
John bar Penkaye (E)  
ANON., Apocalypse of Ps.Methodius;  
hagiography
- 7th/8th cent. \*Jacob of Edessa (W; d.708)  
\*George, bishop of the Arab tribes (W;  
d.724)
- 8th cent. ANON., 'Diyarbekir Commentary' (E)  
Sergius the Stylite (W)  
Elia (W)  
\*John of Dalyatha/John Saba (E)  
\*Joseph Hazzaya/'the Seer' (E)  
Abraham bar Dashandad (E)  
\*ANON., author of Zuqnin Chronicle  
(W; c.776)  
\*Theodore bar Koni (E)

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- 8th/9th cent. \*Timothy I (E; d.823)  
\*Isho' bar Nun (E; d.828)
- 9th cent. \*Job of Edessa (E)  
\*John of Dara (W)  
\*Isho'dad of Merv (E)  
Nonnus of Nisibis (W)  
\*Anton of Tagrit (W)  
\*ANON., Ps.George of Arbela  
\*Thomas of Marga (E)  
Isho'dnah (E)  
ANON., Commentary on OT, NT  
\*Moshe bar Kepha (W; d.903)
- 10th cent. Elia (Elijah) of Anbar (E)  
\*ANON., author of Book of the Cause  
of Causes (W)  
Emmanuel bar Shahhare (E)
- 11th cent. Elia (Elijah) of Nisibis (E; d.1046)
- 12th cent. \*Dionysius bar Salibi (W; d.1171)  
Elia (Elijah) III Abu Halim (E; d.1190)
- 13th cent. \*Michael I, 'the Great' (W; d.1199)  
Iohannan bar Zo'bi (E)  
Solomon of Bosra (E)  
Giwargis Warda (E)  
\*ANON., author of Chronicle to year  
1234 (W)  
\*Jacob Severus bar Shakko (W; d.1241)  
\*Barhebraeus/Bar 'Ebroyo/Abu 'lFarag  
(W; d.1286)
- 13th/14th cent. \*'Abdisho' (E; d.1318)  
Khamis bar Qardahe (E)  
Dioscorus of Gozarto (W)  
ANON., History of Yahballaha III and  
Rabban Sauma (E)  
Timothy II (E; d.1353)

## IV.

### PARTICULAR TOPICS

#### (a) *BIBLE*

The earliest printed edition of the Syriac New Testament was prepared by Johann Widmanstetter with the help of the Syrian Orthodox priest Moses of Mardin; this was published in Vienna in 1555. The main subsequent editions of the complete Syriac Bible (Peshitta) are:

Paris Polyglot Bible (W; 1645); the Syriac was prepared by the Maronite Gabriel Sionita)

London Polyglot Bible (W; 1657); edited by Brian Walton)

Edition by Samuel Lee (W; 1823)

Edition published by the American mission's press in Urmiah (E; 1852)

Edition published by the Dominican press in Mosul (E; 1887-1892)

Trinitarian Bible Society's edition (E; 1913 and reprints), edited by Joseph d-Qelayta and based on the Urmiah edition

Edition published in Beirut (E; 1951), based on the Mosul edition.

United Bible Societies Edition (W; 1979). The original edition is a photographic reprint of S. Lee's edition of both Old and New Testaments, with the Apocrypha added (handwritten, and probably based on the Mosul edition, which alone of the earlier editions includes the 'deuterocanonical' books); in the reprints of 1988 onwards, however, the New Testament text has been taken from the

British and Foreign Bible Society's edition of the New Testament (1920).

#### Old Testament

#### (a) *Peshitta*

A critical edition of the Peshitta translation of the Hebrew Bible is in the course of publication by the Peshitta Institute in Leiden (the Netherlands). The text is based on a manuscript of the 6th/7th century in the Ambrosian Library, Milan (siglum: 7a1), and the variants of manuscripts prior to the 13th century are given in the apparatus (a few volumes include later manuscripts). The volumes that have been published so far are:

I.1 Genesis, Exodus (1977)

II.2 and II.1b Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Joshua (1991)

II.1a Job (1982)

II.2 Judges, I-II Samuel (1978)

II.3 Psalms (1980)

II.4 I-II Kings (1976)

II.5 Proverbs, Wisdom, Ecclesiastes (Qohelet), Song of Songs (1979)

III.1 Isaiah (1987)

III.3 Ezekiel (1985)

III.4 Twelve Prophets, Daniel (1980)

IV.3 Apocalypse of Baruch; IV Ezra (1973)

IV.6 Odes, Apocryphal Psalms, Psalms of Solomon, Tobit, 1(3) Ezra (1972).

## Particular Topics

### (b) *Syrohexapla*

This does not survive complete (parts of the Pentateuch and historical books are lost). The following are the principal editions:

A. Ceriani, *Codex Syro-Hexaplaris* ... (1874); a photolithographic edition of a huge manuscript of the second half of the *Syrohexapla* in the Ambrosian Library, Milan.

P. de Lagarde, *Bibliothecae Syriacae*.. (1892); contains what survives of the Pentateuch and historical books.

W. Baars, *New Syro-Hexaplaric Texts* (1968); contains material additional to de Lagarde's edition.

A. Voobus, *The Pentateuch in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla* (CSCO Subsidia 45, 1975); a photographic edition of a manuscript containing otherwise lost parts of the Pentateuch.

### (c) '*Syro-Lucianic*'

This sixth-century translation from the Septuagint survives only in fragments and may never have covered more than a few books; it is very possible that the translation was commissioned by Philoxenus (alongside the 'Philoxenian' NT), since he specifically quotes it at one point in his Commentary on the Prologue of John. The surviving fragments were edited by A. Ceriani, in *Monumenta Sacra et Profana* 5 (1875).

Part of another sixth-century translation, of the Song of Songs, also survives; this combines material from Peshitta and translation of the Septuagint.

### (d) *Jacob of Edessa (d.708)*

Towards the end of his life Jacob made a revision of certain books of the Old Testament, combining materials from the Peshitta, the *Syrohexapla*, and his own translation of a Greek Septuagint manuscript (or manuscripts). An edition of his translation of the

Books of Samuel, by A. Salvesen, is shortly to be published.

## Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical Books

These were all translated from Greek, with the exception of Bar Sira (*Ecclesiasticus*), which derives direct from the largely lost Hebrew original. The standard edition is by P. de Lagarde (1961), but the texts will be found in the Mosul and United Bible Societies' edition of the Peshitta.

## New Testament

### (a) *Peshitta*

The best edition, based on old manuscripts, is that by the British and Foreign Bible Societies (1920 and reprints); its text is incorporated into the United Bible Societies' edition of the whole Syriac Bible (1988; see above). This includes the minor Catholic epistles (2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude) and the Apocalypse in an anonymous sixth-century translation (these books are absent from the Peshitta translation).

### (b) *Old Syriac*

The most convenient edition, with facing English translation, is by F. C. Burkitt, *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe I-II* (1904); this gives in the text the Curetonianus manuscript, and in the apparatus the variants to be found in the Sinaiticus.

### (c) *Harklean*

The only complete edition of the NT is still that of J. White, with the misleading title *Sacrorum Evangeliorum...versio Syriaca Philoxeniana I-II* (1778, 1799/1803). For recent editions of parts of the Harklean NT, see (d), below.

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### (d) *Comparative editions*

For the Gospels, the texts of the Old Syriac, Peshitta and Harklean are very conveniently aligned in G.Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels I-IV* (1996).

For the Epistles, the texts of the Peshitta and Harklean are aligned, together with quotations from Syriac writers (and Syriac translations from Greek texts) in B.Aland and A.Juckel, *Das Neue Testament in syrischer Überlieferung*, I (1886; Catholic Epistles); II.1, (1991; Romans, I Corinthians); II.2, (1995; II Corinthians - Colossians).

## Tools

### (a) *Concordances*

Concordances are available for the following books:

- Peshitta OT. Pentateuch: W.Strothmann (1986); Historical Books: W.Strothmann (forthcoming); Prophets: W.Strothmann (1984); Psalms: N.Sprenger (1976); Ecclesiastes (Pesh. and Syrohexapla): W.Strothmann (1973); Ben Sira: M.Winter (1976). A complete concordance for the Peshitta OT is in preparation by the Peshitta Institute, Leiden.

- Peshitta NT. G.Kiraz, *A Computer-Generated Concordance to the Syriac NT I-VI* (1993).

### (b) *Dictionaries (NT)*

W.Jennings, *Lexicon to the Syriac NT* (1926);

T.Falla, *A Key to the Peshitta Gospels I (alph to dalath)* (1991);

G.Kiraz, *Lexical Tools to the Syriac New Testament* (1994).

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### (c) *Basic introductions*

A.Voobus, in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplement (1976), 848-54;

B.M.Metzger, *Early Versions of the NT* (1977), ch.1;

P.B.Dirksen, *The OT Peshitta*, in M.J.Mulder (ed.), *Miqra* (1988), 255-97;

S.P.Brock, in *Anchor Dictionary of the Bible*, 6 (1992), 794-9;

“, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition* (SEERI Correspondence Course 1; 1989).

### (b) *EXEGESIS*

Several different genres were used for commentaries:

Commentaries on individual books: e.g. Ephrem, John of Apamea, Daniel of Salah etc.

Commentaries on entire Bible: Isho'dad, Anonymous, Dionysius bar Salibi, Barhebraeus.

Commentaries on Hexaemeron: Narsai (verse), Jacob of Serugh (verse), Jacob of Edessa, Moshe bar Kepha, Emmanuel bar Shahhare (verse).

Verse homilies on episodes: Narsai, Jacob of Serugh.  
Scholia: Jacob of Edessa, Theodore bar Koni.

Questions and Answers: Isho'barnun.

Theological: Philoxenus.

Commentary on the Lectionary: Gannat Bussame ('Garden of Delights'; E).

The main translations of Greek exegetical works in Syriac

### Particular Topics

translation which survive are as follows (given here in alphabetical order):

Athanasius, On Psalms;

Basil, On Hexaameron; various homilies on particular passages;

Cyril of Alexandria, Glaphyra (on Pentateuch); Homilies on Luke;

Eusebius, Questions and Answers on Gospel;

Gregory of Nyssa, Commentary on Song of Songs;

John Chrysostom, Homilies on New Testament (only a few fragments of those on books of the OT, and of some parts of the NT, survive);

Theodore of Mopsuestia; Commentaries on Genesis (fragments), Psalms (incomplete), Ecclesiastes, John;

The following gives an approximate chronological table (and includes some works not mentioned in Ch.II; works by names in brackets do not survive). There is considerable interaction between the E and W Syrian exegetical traditions, and through Ibn at Tayyib's Arabic commentaries the East Syrian exegetical tradition reaches the later Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox traditions.

4th CENT. Ephrem

5th CENT. Tr. from Greek WE

Basil, Hexaameron John of Apamea Narsai Theodore

5th/6th CENT. Jacob of Serugh

John Chrysostom Philoxenus

Eusebius John bar Aphthonia

### Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

Gregory of Nyssa

Athanasius

Cyril of Alexandria

6th CENT. Daniel of Salah (Ahob) (Hnana)

7th CENT. Syrohexapla Jacob of Edessa (Gabriel of Qatar)

8th CENT. George of Be'eltan Anon, Comm.Gen.-Ex.9

Theodore bar Koni

9th CENT. John of Dara Isho 'barnun

Moshe bar Kepha Isho 'dad of Merv

Anon, Comm.OT, NT

10th CENT.

Emmanuel bar Shahhare

11th CENT. Ibn at Tayyib (Arabic)

12th CENT. Dionysius bar Salibi

13th CENT. Barhebraeus Gannat Bussame (Comm.on Lectionary).

A good introductory guide to Syriac exegetical literature on the Old Testament is provided by L. van Rompay, in M. Saebo (ed.), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation*, I,i (Gottingen, 1996), 612-41 [a further instalment will appear in a later volume]; and in his 'La littérature exegetique syriaque et le rapprochement des traditions syrienne orientale et syrienne occidentale', *Parole de l'Orient* 20 (1995), 221-35. for the New Testament a survey is given by J.C. McCullough, in *Near East School of Theology, Theological Review* 5 (1982), 14-33, 79-126.

### (c) LITURGY

Anaphoras

(1) Church of the East: three Anaphoras are in use, the principle one being that of Addai and Mari (or 'the Apostles');



### Particular Topics

this is the oldest surviving Christian anaphora still in use. The other two anaphoras (both probably translated from Greek) are attributed to Theodore of Mopsuestia and to Nestorius. There is a critical edition (with a study) of the anaphora of Addai and Mari by A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (1991), and of the anaphora of Theodore by J. Vadakkel, *The East Syriac Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia* (1989). Several translations of the three anaphoras exist, e.g. K.A. Paul and G. Mookken (1967).

(2) Syrian Orthodox (and Maronite): over 70 anaphoras survive (a list is given in A. Raes, *Anaphorae Syriacae* I.i (1939), xi-xiv; also in *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 102 (1988), 441-45). Attributions are to names from the apostolic times to the middle ages, and in several cases the attribution may vary in the different manuscripts. Some anaphoras are related to anaphoras in other liturgical traditions; thus the Syrian Orthodox anaphora of the XII Apostles is related to the Greek anaphora of John Chrysostom, and the (Maronite) anaphora known as the Sharrar (or Peter III) is related to the East Syrian anaphora of Addai and Mari. A critical edition of 22 anaphoras, with facing Latin translations, is to be found in the series *Anaphorae Syriacae* (Rome, 1939-); the volumes published contain:

I.i (1939), Timothy of Alexandria, Severus of Antioch; I.ii (1940) Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, XII Apostles I-II; I.iii (1944) Dioscorus I-II, Cyril; II.i (1951) Jacob of Serugh I-III, John Saba; II.ii (1953) James I-II, Gregory John; II.iii (1973) Celestine, Peter III (= Sharrar), Thomas; III.i (1981) John of Bosra, Jacob of Edessa, Julius. Latin translations of many other unpublished anaphoras can be found in E. Renaudot, *Liturgiarum Orientalium Collectio* II (1716, repr. 1847, 1970).

Two current bilingual editions contain quite a large selec-

tion of anaphoras:

A. Konat (ed.; Pampakuda 1986), Syriac-Malayalam: James (short), Dionysius bar Salibi I, John Chrysostom [= John of Harran], John the Evangelist, Mattai the Shepherd, Eustathius I, Julius, Xystus, Peter II, XII Apostles II, Isaac, Abraham the Hunter, and one compiled from different anaphoras.

Mar Athanasius Samuel (ed.; Lodi, NJ, 1991), Syriac-English: James, Mark, Peter II, XII Apostles II, John the Evangelist, Xystus, Julius, John Chrysostom [= John of Harran in Raes' list], Cyril of Alexandria, Jacob of Serugh I, Philoxenus I, Severus, Dionysius bar Salibi I.

### Baptism

(1) Church of the East. The present service goes back to Isho 'yah III (d. 659); a translation can be found in Paul and Mookken (see above, under anaphoras).

(2) Syrian Orthodox. The present service is attributed to Severus of Antioch; it exists in two somewhat different forms, one associated with Antioch, the other with Tagrit. Two other baptismal services also survive but are no longer in use, one attributed to Timothy of Alexandria, the other anonymous; these have several links with the Maronite rite.

There is a bilingual, Syriac-English, edition of the Antioch rite by A. Y. Samuel (1974), who also published bilingual editions of the marriage and funeral services (1974); an English translation of the Tagrit rite (also in use in India) is to be found in M. Elenjikal, *Baptism in the Malankara Church* (1974). The other two old services are translated by S. P. Brock in *Le Museon* 63 (1970), 367-431 [Timothy], and *Parole de l'Orient* 8 (1977/8), 311-46 [anon.].

## Particular Topics

(3) Maronite. The service is attributed to Jacob of Serugh (and indeed there are many parallels with his writings). A photographic edition of the oldest manuscripts, with French translation, is given by A. Mouhanna, *Les rites de l'initiation dans l'église maronite* (1978); a revised text (of 1942) is in current use.

(4) Melkite. The earliest form of the service, before the rite was Byzantinized in the middle ages, survives in a few manuscripts and is attributed to Basil. A short text with some very archaic features is also preserved, (ed. and tr. S.P. Brock, *Parole in l'Orient* 3 (1972), 119-30).

### Weekday Office and Festal Hymnary (Hudra/Fenqitho)

(1) Church of the East. ET of weekday office by A.J. Maclean, *East Syrian Daily Offices* (1894, repr. 1969). ET of specific parts of the Hudra are to be found in J. Moolan, *The Period of Annunciation Nativity...* (1985); P. Kuruthukulangara, *The Feast of the Nativity...* (1989); and V. Pathikulangara, *Resurrection, Life and Renewal...* (1982).

(2) Syrian Orthodox. ET of weekday office (Shehimo) by Bede Griffiths, *Book of Common Prayer of the Syrian Church* (1965); adapted ET by Francis Acharya, *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit* (1980). Adapted ET of Fenqitho by Francis Acharya, *The Crown of the Year I-III* (1982-6).

(3) Maronite. ET of Fenqitho, *The Prayer of the Faithful according to the Maronite Liturgical Year I-III* (1982-5).

## (d) CANON LAW

### East Syrian

The most important collection is a vast corpus of some 80 texts whose final redaction has been associated with Catholicos Elia I (d. 1049), but which may in fact be somewhat later. The

### Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

texts are arranged in approximate chronological order, and the most important constituent parts are:

- Pseudo-Apostolic canons (in two collections, of 27 and 83 canons);
- Canons of Ancyra, Neocaesarea, Nicaea, Gangra, Antioch, Laodicea, Constantinople I, Carthage, Chalcedon;
- Letter of Marutha and 73 canons [ET];
- Various synodal and other letters;
- Synods of the Church of the East (often known as the 'Synodicon Orientale' [FT, ET forthcoming]); this consists of: Synod of Isaac (410); Synod of Yahballaha I (419/20); Synod of Dadisho' (423/4); Synod of Aqaq (485, 486); Synod of Baboi (497); Synod of Aba (543/4); Synod of Joseph (554); Synod of Ezekiel (576); Synod of Isho'yab I (585/6); Synod of Sabrisho' (596); Synod of Gregory (605); Synod of Giwargis (George) (676). Some further documents are also included.
- Various monastic rules [ET];
- Statutes of the School of Nisibis [ET];
- Legal decisions of Hnanisho' (773-780), Timothy I (780-823); Isho' barnun (823-28);
- Legal compendia by Simeon of Revardashir (7th cent.), Isho' bokht (8th/9th cent.) and Abdisho' bar Bahriz (9th cent.);
- Syro-Roman Law Book;
- Various documents of Timothy I;
- Various treatises on inheritance.

Other East Syrian compendia include those of Gabriel of Basra (884/91), which does not survive complete; the

## Canon Law

Nomocanon [LT] and Rules of ecclesiastical judgements, [LT] compiled by 'Abdisho', metropolitan of Soba (Nisibis; = 96 above); and the Book of the Fathers (Liber Patrum [LT]), attributed to the fourth-century Catholicos Simeon bar Sabba'e, but belonging probably to the 13th/14th century. An important East Syrian compendium of canon law was produced in Arabic by Ibn at-Tayyib (d.1043), entitled *Fiqh an-Nasraniya* (Law of Christianity).

Helpful guides to the legal texts of the Church of the East can be found in A. Thazhat, *The Juridical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church* (Kottayam 1987), and in W. Selb, *Orientalisches Kirchenrecht, I, Die Geschichte des Kirchenrechts der Nestorianer* (Wien, 1981). In French there is a fine survey article on the canon law of the Church of the East by J. Dauvillier in *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*.

## West Syrian

Several large collections of canon law survive, of somewhat varying content. One of these manuscripts (Damascus Patr. 8/11 of 1204) has been published in full under the title 'The Synodicon...' [ET]; among the constituent elements of this particular collection are the following:

- Apostolic canons;
- Apostolic ordinances through Hippolytus;
- Canons of Nicaea, Ancyra, Neocaesarea, Gangra, Antioch, Laodicaea, Constantinople I, Ephesus I, Chalcedon;
- Canons of John bar Qursos;
- Canons of Rabbula;
- Excerpts from Severus' Letters;

## Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

- Excerpts from Jacob of Edessa;
- Canons of the patriarchs George, Quryaqos, Dionysius, John, and Ignatius;
- Texts on various topics, e.g. unlawful marriage and inheritance, derived from Muslim law;
- Syro-Roman Law Book;
- Many further excerpts from Severus and others;
- Canons of the monastery of Mar Mattai;
- Canons of John of Mardin for the monastery of Mar Hnanya (= modern Deir ez-Za'faran, outside Mardin).

Other important collections are the fourth-century *Didascalia Apostolorum* [ET] (lost in Greek), which is incorporated into some of the synodical collections; and the Acts of the Second Council of Ephesus (449) [GT, ET], preserved in a single early manuscript. Barhebraeus' *Nomocanon* provides a collection of canons arranged thematically.

The best guides to the West Syrian texts are A. Voobus, *Syrische Kanonensammlungen, IA, B, Westsyrische Originalurkunde* (CSCO 307, 317; 1970),

and W. Selb, *Orientalisches Kirchenrecht, 2, Die Geschichte des Kirchenrechts der Westsyrier* (Wien, 1989).

## (e) MONASTIC LITERATURE AND SPIRITUALITY

It is convenient to distinguish between several different periods:

### (1) 3rd/4th century

In this period the native Syriac ascetic tradition took on certain characteristics which distinguish it from early monastic developments at the same time in Egypt; the best witness to this 'proto-monasticism' (as it may be called) is provided by Aphrahat, Demonstrations 6-7. The consecrated life is lived within the Christian community, either in common households, or within the family itself, and not physically withdrawn from it (as was the case in Egypt), and evidently certain ascetic vows were undertaken (perhaps at baptism, which in those days normally took place in adulthood). Two terms in particular are used of such people, *ihidaya* and *bnay qyama*; although later on *ihidaya*

Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

came to mean 'solitary', or just 'monk' (translating Greek *monachos*), in the fourth century the term had much wider connotations, notably 'single' (celibate), 'single-minded', and (above all) follower and imitator of Christ the *Ihidaya* (the term which translates Greek *monogenes*). The origins and semantic background of the other term, *bnay qyama* (singular *bar/bath qyama*), are disputed and the conventional translation 'sons (i.e. members) of the covenant' is not certain. It would appear that the terms *ihidaya* and *bnay qyama* both refer to individuals who live a consecrated life; within this group the *bthule/bthulatha*, 'virgins' (male and female) are the unmarried, while the *qaddishe* (literally 'holy') are the married couples who have renounced sexual intercourse (the term derives from Exodus 19, verses 10, 15). An important text from the end of this period is the Book of Steps (*Liber Graduum*).

### (2) 5th/6th century

In this period the indigenous Syrian protomonastic tradition became absorbed into the mainstream monastic tradition that originated in Egypt in two different forms, the cenobitic tradition of Pachomius, and the eremitical tradition of Antony. In the course of these two centuries Egyptian monastic tradition gained more and more prestige, and all the main texts concerning early Egyptian monasticism were translated from Greek into Syriac (notably Athanasius' Life of Antony, Palladius' *Lausiac History*, the *Historia Monachorum*, and various collections of *Apophthegmata*, or Sayings of the Desert Fathers). In due course memory of the Syriac protomonastic tradition faded away and was forgotten; as a result of this new origins for Syrian monasticism were sought out, and the foundation of Syrian and Mesopotamian monasticism came to be accredited to the Egyptian Mar Awgen (Eugenius) and his disciples. Also translated into

Syriac in this period were many other Greek monastic writings, notably many works by Evagrius (d.399), the Macarian Homilies, Basil's ascetic writings, the Letters of Ammonius, the corpus attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, the Asceticon of Abba Isaiah, works by Mark the Monk and others.

The earliest Syriac author of this period is John of Apameia (who seems to belong to the early fifth century). Though many of his works still remain to be published, John is emerging as a figure of major importance, both in his own right, and for the influence he evidently had on the later Syriac tradition (he is the originator of what became the standard three-fold pattern of the spiritual life, the stages of the body, of the soul and of the spirit).

From the 6th century the most important relevant writers are Philoxenus and Stephen bar Sudhaili in the West Syriac tradition, and Babai the Great in the East (the mid 6th century had witnessed a monastic revival, led by Abraham of Kashkar, in the Church of the East).

### (3) 7th/8th century

This is the period of the flowering of the East Syrian monastic tradition, which produced a large number of famous authors writing on various aspects of the spiritual life, notably Sahdona/Martyrius, Isaac of Nineveh, John of Dalyatha (John the Elder, or Saba), and Joseph the Seer (Hazzaya). In the 7th century 'Ananisho' collected together into a single volume, entitled *The Paradise of the Fathers*, the classic Egyptian monastic texts; commentaries on various earlier monastic texts were also provided (notably by Dadisho', on Abba Isaiah's *Asceticon*, and on various *Apophthegmata*). Several of these East Syriac monastic texts evidently reached Palestine in the 8th century: the

homilies forming the 'First Part' of Isaac's works (along with a short form of Philoxenus' Letter to Patricius and four homilies by John of Dalyatha) were translated into Greek at monastery of Mar Saba, while works by a number of different East Syriac monastic authors of this period were read and copied in Syriac by Chalcedonian Orthodox monks (and survive in the Library of St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai).

West Syriac monastic authors of this period appear to have concentrated their energies in different directions: instead of writing on monastic topics they engaged in translating and commenting on texts of Greek provenance (biblical, ecclesiastical and secular). Most famous of these scholar-monks is Jacob of Edessa (d.708). (It should be remembered that over the centuries it has normally been monastic copyists who have transmitted to us the Syriac texts that survive to this day).

### (4) 9th century

Two important monastic histories, by Isho'dnah and Thomas of Marga, belong to this century.

### (5) 12th/13th century

This was a period of revived literary activity in Syriac, and a notable feature is the use of Muslim religious works by some Syriac writers: thus, for example, Barhebraeus in his *Ethicon* makes considerable use of an influential work by al-Ghazzali.

Many relevant texts of this, and later periods, remain unpublished, let alone studied.

The following are the main relevant authors/works, in chronological order (numbers in brackets refer to Section III):

c.400

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Aphrahat, Demonstrations 6-7

Liber Graduum/Book of Steps (= 13).

5th/6th centuries

**(a) Syriac writers**

John of Apamea (John the Solitary) (= 16).

Jacob of Serugh (= 20), various memre and letters.

Philoxenus (= 22), Discourses, Letter to Patricius, and other letters.

Isaac of Antioch (= 23), various memre.

Stephen bar Sudhaili (= 26), Book of the Holy Hierotheos.

Sergius of Resh'aina (= 27), On the spiritual life.

**(b) Translations from Greek**

Evagrius, numerous works

Macarian Homilies

Athanasius, Life of Antony

Palladius, Lausiac History

Historia Monachorum

Apophthegmata/Sayings of the Desert Fathers

Ammonas, Letters

Abba Isaiah, Asceticon

Mark the Monk, various works

'Dionysius the Areopagite' (first translation, by Sergius)

Theodore of Mopsuestia, lost book on 'the Perfection of

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the Way of Life'.

6th/7th centuries

**(a) Syriac writers**

Abraham of Nathpar (= 38).

Shubhalmaran (= 42)

Babai (= 43), Commentary on Evagrius' Centuries; (lost 'Book of Perfection')

Martyrius/Sahdona (= 44), Book of Perfection.

Gregory of Cyprus (= 48).

'Ananisho', compiler of Book of the Paradise (of Egyptian Fathers).

Isaac of Nineveh (= 55).

Shem'on d-Taybutheh (= 56).

Dadisho' (= 57).

**(b) translations from Greek**

'Dionysius the Areopagite' (second translation, by Phokas, late 7th cent.)

John Climacus, The Spiritual Ladder.

8th century

John of Dalyatha (John the Elder/Saba) (= 66).

Joseph Hazzaya (= 67).

9th century

Monastic histories by Thomas of Marga (= 79) and Isho'dnah (= 80).

13th century



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Barhebraeus (= 95), Book of the Dove, Ethicon.

(Many monastic writings from the 7th century onwards remain unpublished).

Excerpts in translation can be found in:

S.P.Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Kalamazoo 1987).

A.Mingana, *Early Christian Mystics* (Woodbrooke Studies 7, 1934).

The following works provide a general orientation:

S.Beggiani, *Introduction to Eastern Christian Spirituality: the Syriac Tradition* (Scranton 1991).

R.Beulay, *La lumiere sans forme. Introduction a l'etude de la mystique chretienne syro-orientale* (Chevetogne 1987).

G.Blum, *Mysticism in the Syriac Tradition* (SEERI Correspondence Course 7, 1990).

R.C.Bondi, 'The spirituality of Syriac-speaking Christians', in B.McGinn and J.Meyendorf (eds), *Christian Spirituality. Origins to Twelfth Century* (London 1986), 152-61.

S.P.Brock, 'Syriac spirituality', in C.P.M.Jones and others (eds), *The Study of Spirituality* (London 1986), 199-215.

" , *Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition* (SEERI, Moran Etho series 2, 1989).

A.Guillaumont and I.H.Dalmaï, *Syriaque (spiritualite)*, in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite* 14 (1990), 1429-50.

A.Voobus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* (3 vols, CSCO Subs.; 1958, 1960, 1988).

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P.Yousif, 'An introduction to the East Syrian Spirituality', in A.Thottakara (ed.), *East Syrian Spirituality* (Bangalore 1990), 1-97.

For the early period (especially 4th cent.) and the distinctive Syriac 'proto-monastic' tradition the following are helpful:

S.Abouzeyd, *Ihdayutha: a study of the life of singleness in the Syrian Orient* (Oxford 1993).

E.Beck, 'Asceticisme et monachisme chez s.Ephrem', *L'Orient Syrien* 3 (1958), 273-98.

S.P.Brock, 'Early Syrian asceticism', *Numen* 20 (1973), 1-19, reprinted in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London 1984).

" : 'The ascetic ideal: St Ephrem and proto-monasticism', in his *The Luminous Eye* (Rome 1985/Kalamazoo 1992), ch. 8.

S.Griffith, 'Singles in God's service...', *The Harp* 4 (1991), 145-59.

" , 'Monks, "Singles" and the "Sons of the Covenant" ...', in *Eulogema: Studies in honor of R.Taft* (Studia Anselmiana 110, 1994), 141-60.

" , 'Asceticism in the Church of Syria. The hermeneutics of early Syrian monasticism', in V.L.Wimbush and R.Valantasis (eds), *Asceticism* (1995), 220-48).

A.Guillaumont, *Aux origines du monachisme chretien* (Abbaye de Bellefontaine 1979).

T.Koonammakkal, 'Early Christian monastic origins. A general introduction in the context of Syriac Orient', *The Christian Orient* 13 (1992), 139-62.

R.Murray, 'The exhortation to candidates for ascetical vows

## Chronicles

at baptism in the ancient Syriac Church', *New Testament Studies* 21 (1974/5), 59-80.

“, 'The characteristics of the earliest Syriac Christianity', in N.Garsoian and others (eds), *East of Byzantium. Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington DC 1982), 3-16.

G.Nedungatt, 'The covenanters of the early Syriac-speaking church', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 39 (1973), 191-215, 419-44.

C.Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart: the Messalian Controversy in History, Texts and Language to AD 431* (Oxford 1991). [Of relevance to the Book of Steps].

Many good articles on individual authors of all periods can be found in the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite*. A collection of some surviving monastic rules can be found in A.Voobus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents regarding Legislation relative to Syrian Asceticism* (Stockholm 1960).

## (f) CHRONICLES

Historical writing in Syriac has taken on several different forms. For World History (beginning with Creation) and for Church History the models were provided by Eusebius of Caesarea, whose *Chronicon* and *Church History* were both translated into Syriac (though neither survives in complete form). The earliest Syriac writer to compose a World History was Jacob of Edessa (d.708), but of this only fragments survive; for Ecclesiastical History the earliest Syriac writer was John of Ephesus (= 34; late 6th cent). Earlier historical writing in Syriac took the form of local histories, the earliest to survive being the work usually known today as that of 'Joshua the Stylite' (= 25), belonging to the early sixth century.

## Brief outline of Syr. Lit.

Many Syriac chronicles and other historical works no longer survive, or are only partially known through their re-use by later writers. A particularly important chronicle which is now lost is that of the Syrian Orthodox patriarch Dionysius of Telmahre (d.845), covering AD 582-842; considerable use of it, however, was made by both Michael the Great (= 89) and the anonymous author of the chronicle to the year 1234 (= 93), so that a certain amount of it can be approximately reconstructed.

The seventh century, in particular, produced a number of apocalyptic texts, where descriptions of contemporary events are provided with an apocalyptic outcome; notable examples are the poem on Alexander the Great (= 49), from the late 620s, and the *Apocalypse of Ps.Methodius* (= 59), of c.691/2.

- *Surviving World Histories* (covering from Creation to the time of the author):

Ps.Dionysius of Telmahre/Zuqnin Chronicle (= 69).

Michael the Great (= 89).

Anonymous (= 93), Chronicle up to the year 1234.

Barhebraeus (= 95), *Chronicon*.

- *Ecclesiastical Histories*:

John of Ephesus (= 34).

Ps.Zacharias Rhetor (= 36).

Barhadbeshabba 'Arbaya (= 40).

Barhebraeus (= 95), *Ecclesiastical History*.

- *Local histories*:

'Joshua the Stylite' (= 25).

Chronicle of Edessa (= 33).

## Chronicles

[Chronicle of Arbela: great uncertainty surrounds this work: the editor (Mingana) claimed it as a sixth-century work, but according to some it could be the work of Mingana himself; at present the matter remains unresolved].

Khuzistan Chronicle (= 53).

Many shorter, or fragmentary, chronicles also survive. For monastic histories, see (e) above.

For a general orientation the following are useful: S.P.Brock, 'Syriac sources for seventh-century history', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1976), 17-36, reprinted in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (1984), ch.7.

„, `Syriac historical writing: a survey of the main sources', *Journal of the Iraqi Academy (Syriac Corporation)* 5 (1979/80), 297-326, reprinted in *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (1992), ch.1.

L.Conrad, 'Syriac perspectives on Bilad al-Sham during the Abbasid period', in M.A.Al-Bakhit and R.Schick (eds), *Bilad al-Sham during the Abbasid Period: 5th International Conference (Amman 1991)*, 1-44.

J-M.Fiey, 'Les chroniqueurs syriaques avaient-ils le sens critique?' *Parole de l'Orient* 12 (1984/5), 253-64.

P.Nagel, 'Grundzuge syrischer Geschichtsschreibung', in *Berliner Byzantinische Arbeiten* 55 (1990), 245-59.

A.N.Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (1993). [Translations of excerpts with introductions].

J.B.Segal, 'Syriac chronicles as source material for the history of Islamic peoples', in B.Lewis and P.M.Holt (eds), *Historians of the Middle East* (1962), 246-58.

W.Witkowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre. A Study in the History of Historiography* (Uppsala 1987).

## (g) SECULAR LITERATURE

This can conveniently be divided into (1) popular, and (2) learned.

### (1) *Popular literature.*

Much of this literature is international in character, and can be found translated into many different languages. Notable examples are:

- The Story of Ahikar (= III.10). Originating probably in the sixth or fifth century BC, this Aramaic story was translated into Greek in the Hellenistic period; though this Greek version does not survive, it provided the source for a section, based on Ahikar, in the extant Greek Life of Aesop; it also served as the basis for the later translations of the Story of Ahikar into Slavonic. The Syriac form of the story survives in several slightly different forms, and it was from Syriac that the other oriental versions ultimately arrive (Arabic, Armenian, Old Turkish, Modern Syriac etc.).

- Aesop's Fables. The Fables of Aesop are much older than the Life of Aesop, and they are transmitted in a number of different forms. A collection of them came to be translated into Syriac (ed. + FT, B.Lefevre, 1941), and there the name Aisopos came to be corrupted into Iosipos (i.e. Josephus!). The Syriac in turn served as the basis for a translation into Arabic (where Aesop now takes on the name Loqman), and back (!) into Greek (at Melitene, end of the 11th century) where the work is attributed to 'Syntipas' - since it was translated at the same time as the story of Sindbad (= Greek Syntipas), another popular work, perhaps of Middle Persian origin.

- Kalilah and Dimnah. This collection of delightful Indian animal stories (which are preserved in the Pancatantra) was

## Secular Literature

translated into Middle Persian (lost) in the sixth century, and thence (by a certain Budh) into Syriac; this first Syriac translation is the earliest extant witness to the collection in the Middle East/West Asia. The Middle Persian text was translated into Arabic in the 9th century by Ibn al Muqaffa', and from this Arabic version a second Syriac translation was made (at an unknown date). The Arabic was also the source for many other medieval translations, into Persian, Greek, Spanish and Hebrew, and it was through these translations that the work reached western Europe in the 16th and 17th century (under the name 'Bidpay' or 'Pilpay'), where it was to enjoy immense popularity. (For translations of the two Syriac versions, see Section V).

- The History of Alexander the Great, by Pseudo-Callisthenes, was another text which caught the popular imagination and so got translated (from Greek) into many different languages, both oriental and western. The Syriac version (ed. + ET, E.A.W.Budge, 1889) surprisingly was not translated direct from Greek, but comes by way of a lost Middle Persian version; the work gave rise to a number of Syriac works devoted to the theme of Alexander, notably a long apocalyptic poem of the early seventh century (= III.49), which is often wrongly attributed to Jacob of Serugh.

### (2) *Learned literature*

This may concern a variety of different fields, natural sciences, geography, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, rhetoric etc. It needs to be remembered that many works in these areas have been lost. Surviving works devoted specifically to natural sciences are rare (Job of Edessa's Book of Treasures, III.73, is exceptional in this respect), and for the most part these topics (and geography) are dealt with in the course of commentaries on the Six Days of Creation (Hexaemeron): thus

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the Hexaemeron commentaries by Jacob of Edessa and Moshe bar Kepha, in particular, contain a great deal of material relevant to these subjects. On astronomy works by Sergius of Resh'aina, Severus Sebokht and (above all) Barhebraeus survive. In the Abbasid period (especially 8th/9th century) Gundishapor (Beth Lapat) was famous for its Syriac medical school, and many medical works in Syriac were produced at this period, although only very few of these survive. One particularly influential work was Hunayn ibn Ishaq's Medical Questions: this work, which is extant in both Syriac and Arabic, was translated into Latin, where it was known as the Eisagoge (Introduction) of Ioannitius, and has been described as 'one of the most widely diffused early translations of Arabic medicine' in western Europe.

The first Syriac author to pay serious attention to Greek philosophy was Sergius of Resh'aina (III.27), who provided Syriac readers with introductions to the earlier of Aristotle's logical works (the Organon), which formed the basis of all higher education in Late Antiquity. Many subsequent writers dealt with similar topics, and several provided commentaries, either to specific books within the Organon (thus Probus, who perhaps belongs to the 6th century), or to the entire Organon (thus Dionysius bar Salibi and Barhebraeus). Others, like Severus Sebokht, Athanasius of Balad and Jacob of Edessa in the seventh century, provided introductory materials for the benefit of Syriac readers embarking on philosophical studies. The 12th and 13th centuries witnessed a great deal of activity of an encyclopaedic nature, covering all areas of human knowledge; many of the relevant texts still await proper publication and study: remarkably, this even applies to Barhebraeus' largest and most important encyclopedic work on philosophy, the Cream of Sciences. (For translations from Greek, see below).

In the field of rhetoric the main works are by Anton of Tagrit, Jacob bar Shakko, and Barhebraeus. The standard Greek grammar of Late Antiquity, by Dionysius Thrax, was translated (and adapted) into Syriac as early as the sixth century.

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Syriac writers also played a very important role in translating Greek scientific, medical and philosophical works. This took place in three main phases: (1) sixth-century translations, sometimes fairly interpretative in character; (2) seventh-century revisions, or new translations, usually aiming to reproduce the original Greek very accurately; and (3) ninth-century translations (and revisions), usually serving as a stepping-stone to translation into Arabic.

One of the earliest Syriac writers to undertake this sort of work was Sergius of Resh'aina who, besides translating the Dionysian Corpus into Syriac, also translated an influential pseudo-Aristotelian treatise 'On the Universe', and Alexander of Aphrodisias' 'Causes of the Universe' (lost in the Greek original), together with a considerable number of works by Galen. Various anonymous translations of more popular Greek philosophical literature of an ethical nature were probably undertaken in this earlier period: these include translations of treatises by Isocrates, Lucian, Plutarch, Themistius, as well as a pseudo-Platonic dialogue on the soul (whose Greek original is lost), various sayings of Greek philosophers (among them, the Pythagorean woman philosopher Theano). Also belonging to this first period will be the earliest translations of Aristotle's logical works (which formed the basis of higher education in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages), together with Porphyry's Introduction (Eisagoge) to them (these translations have sometimes been attributed to Sergius, but for not good reason).

During the second period a number of revised (and more literal) translations were made of books of the Organon; many of the scholars engaged in this work seem to have had connections with the monastery of Qenneshre (on the Euphrates); prominent among them was the Syrian Orthodox patriarch Athanasius II (d.687) and George, bishop of the Arab Tribes (d.724).

The third period (late eighth and especially, ninth century) witnessed a great flurry of translation activity from Greek into both Syriac and Arabic, thanks to the general patronage of a number of the Abbasid caliphs and the growing interest of Arab scholars in the heritage of Greek philosophy and science. Many of the earlier translators belonged to one or other of the Syriac Churches, and frequently they found it more convenient to translate first from Greek into Syriac (for which there was the advantage of several centuries of translation experience), and then from Syriac into Arabic (for which there was no prior experience). The most famous of these translators was Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d.c.873), whose translation work covered biblical, medical and philosophical texts (he was also an author in his own right).

Since Arabic tended to replace Syriac as a vehicle for learned secular literature in the Middle Ages, many Syriac translations ceased to be copied (this seems to apply especially to those made in the third period); thus it is known from quotations in Syriac authors such as Moshe bar Kepha, John of Dara, Dionysius bar Salibi, Jacob bar Shakko, Barhebraeus and others, that many Greek scientific, medical and philosophical works must once have existed in Syriac translation, even though no manuscripts of these survive - or where they do, they are in a very fragmentary state (this applies, for example, to the Syriac versions of Euclid and of Theophrastus' Meteorology).

## Secular Literature

General orientations, and guides to particular topics, can be found in the following:

S.P.Brock, 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', = ch.2 in SPB, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London 1984).

" , 'From antagonism to assimilation: Syriac attitudes to Greek learning', = ch 5 in *Syriac Perspectives*.

" , 'Towards a history of Syriac translation technique', III Symposium Syriacum (OCA 221, 1982), 1-14, = *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (Aldershot 1992), ch.

" , 'The Syriac background to Hunayn's translation techniques', *Aram* 3 (1991), 139-62.

" , 'The Syriac Commentary tradition' [on Aristotle's *Organon*], in C.Burnett (ed.), *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts* (London 1993), 3-18.

R.Degen, 'Ein Corpus medicorum syriacorum', *Medizin-historisches Journal* 7 (1972), 114- 22.

" , 'Galen im syrischen', in V.Nutton (ed), *Galen: Problems and Prospects* (London 1981), 131-66.

De Lacy o'Leary, *How Greek Science passed to the Arabs* (1949).

M.Dols, 'Syriac into Arabic: the transmission of Greek medicine', *Aram* 1 (1989), 45-52.

G.Endress, 'Philosophie und Wissenschaften bei den Syrern', in H.Gaetje, *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie II* (Wiesbaden 1987), 407-12.

H.Hugonnard-Roche, 'Aux origines de l'exegese orientale de la logique d'Aristote: Sergius de Resh'aina', *Journal asiatique* 277 (1989), 1-17.

" , 'L'intermediaire syriaque dans la transmission de la

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philosophie grecque a l'arabe: le cas de l'*Organon* d'Aristote', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 1 (1991), 187-209.

" , 'Note sur Sergius de Resh'aina, traducteur du grec en syriaque et commentateur d'Aristote', in G.Endress and R.Kruk (eds), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism* (Leiden 1997), 121-43.

G.Panicker, 'The Book of Treasures' [by Job of Edessa], *The Harp* 8/9 (1995/6), 151-9.

F.E.Peters, 'The Greek and Syriac background', in S.Hosseini Nasr and O.Leaman (eds), *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London 1996), 40-51.

G.Strohmaier, 'Hunayn ibn Ishaq - an Arab scholar translating into Syriac', *Aram* 3 (1991), 163-70.

G.Troupeau, 'Le role des syriaques dans la transmission et l'exploitation du patrimoine philosophique et scientifique grec', *Arabica* 38 (1991), 1-10.

J.Watt, 'Grammar, rhetoric and the Enkyklios Paideia in Syriac', *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenlandischen Gesellschaft* 143 (1993), 45-71.

" , 'The Syriac reception of Platonic and Aristotelian rhetoric', *Aram* 5 (1993), 579-601.

M.Zonta, *Fonti greche e orientali dell'Economia di Bar-Hebraeus nell'opera La Crema della Scienza*, (Naples 1992).



## V.

### TRANSLATIONS INTO SYRIAC

A vast number of translations, mainly from Greek, were made into Syriac, above all during the 5th-9th centuries. The earliest translations are often quite free (and are sometimes much expanded), but in the 6th and especially the 7th century a much more literal style of translation came into favour, and many older translations were then revised (or sometimes, completely new ones provided); a further wave of translations came in the late eighth and ninth centuries, as part of the general interest at that time in translating Greek philosophical and scientific literature into Arabic (often done by way of Syriac).

The following are the main surviving translations into Syriac (from Greek unless otherwise stated; \* denotes that the Greek original is wholly or mostly lost).

2nd cent.(?)	Peshitta OT (from Hebrew)
	Diatessaron (lost, apart from quotations)
3rd cent.(?)	Old Syriac Gospels [ET]
	Much of OT 'apocrypha'
before 411	Clementine Recognitions
	*Titus of Bostra, Against the Manichaeans
	*Eusebius, Theophania
	*Eusebius, Palestinian Martyrs [ET]
4th/5th cent.	Eusebius, Church History
	Josephus, Wars Book VI

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5th cent.

\*Didascalia [ET]  
Basil, On the Holy Spirit, On the Hexaemeron [ET], various Homilies  
\*Theodore of Mopsuestia, Commentary on John [LT]  
\*Theodore of Mopsuestia, Catechetical Homilies [ET]

5th/6th cent.

\*Syro-Roman Law Book  
\*Aristeidēs, Apology [ET]  
\*Evagrius, various works  
\*Epiphanius, On Weights and Measures [ET]  
John Chrysostom, Commentaries and various other works  
Gregory of Nyssa. Comm. on Song of Songs, various other works  
Gregory of Nazianzus, Homilies (1st translation)  
Athanasius, Life of Antony [ET], various other works [ET]  
Cyril of Alexandria, various works  
Macarius, Homilies [GT]  
Ignatius of Antioch, Letters [ET]  
Nilus, monastic writings [IT]  
Palladius, Lausiac History [ET]  
Historia Monachorum [ET]  
Apophthegmata (Sayings of the Desert Fathers) [ET]  
Ammonius, Letters [ET]  
Abba Isaiah, Asceticon [FT]

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- Themistius, Lucian, Ps.Plutarch (various works)
- 6th cent. Dionysius the Areopagite (1st translation, by Sergius of Resh'aina)  
 \*Severus of Antioch, Cathedral Homilies (1st translation, by Paul of Kallinikos)  
 \*Severus of Antioch, various other works  
 Joseph and Aseneth  
 \*Life of Peter the Iberian [GT]  
 \*Zacharias, Life of Severus [FT]  
 \*Nestorius, Bazaar of Heracleides [ET, FT]  
 Mark the Monk  
 Kalilah and Dimnah (from Middle Persian) [GT]  
 Alexander Romance (from Middle Persian) [ET]  
 Porphyry, Eisagoge (1st translation)  
 Galen, various works (tr. by Sergius of Resh'aina)  
 Aristotle, early books of Organon (1st translation)
- 7th cent. Syrohexapla OT (tr. by Paul of Tella)  
 Harklean NT (tr. by Thomas of Harkel)  
 Basil, Homilies (2nd translation)  
 \*Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on Luke [ET, FT]  
 Gregory of Nazianzus, Homilies (2nd translation, by Paul of Edessa).  
 \*Athanasius, Festal Letters [ET]

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- \*Severus, Homilies (revised translation by Jacob of Edessa) [FT]  
 \*Severus, Select Letters (tr. by Athanasius of Balad) [ET]  
 Porphyry, Eisagoge (2nd translation, by Athanasius of Balad)  
 Dionysius the Areopagite (2nd translation, by Phokas of Edessa)  
 John Klimakos, The Ladder.
- late 8th/9th cent. (This was a period of great translation activity from Greek into Arabic, especially of philosophical, medical and scientific works; although the names of many of the translators are known, the intermediary Syriac translations of this period are for the most part lost).
- 11th cent.(?) Kalilah and Dimnah (from Arabic) [ET]  
 Sindbad (from Arabic) [ET]

## VI.

### SUMMARY GUIDE TO ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

The following provides a guide to translations available for the authors covered in Section III and translations into Syriac mentioned in Section V; only where English translations are absent or inadequate is reference made to translations into other modern lan-

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guages. The numbers for Syriac authors are those of Section III; an asterisk in the present chapter indicates that an edition of the Syriac original is included. Fuller bibliographical details can be found by consulting the Syriac bibliographies by C.Moss (covering up to 1960) and S.P.Brock (1960-1990), for whose titles see Section VIII.

(4) BOOK of the LAWS of the COUNTRIES (School of BARDAISAN): \*W.Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum* (1855), 3-34, and \*H.J.W.Drijvers (1965).

(5) ODES of SOLOMON: \*J.H.Charlesworth (1973); a better translation, by J.A.Emerton, in H.F.D.Sparks (ed.), *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford, 1884), 683-731.

(6) ACTS of THOMAS: \*W.Wright (1871); A.F.J.Klijn (1962), with introduction.

(7) MELITO, Apology: \*W.Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum* (1855), 41-51.

(8) MENANDER, Sayings: T.Baarda, in J.H.Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha II* (1985), 591-606 (with good introduction).

(9) MARA, Letter to Serapion: \*W.Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum* (1855), 70-76. Cp K.McVey, in *V Symposium Syriacum* (1990), 257-72.

(10) AHIKAR: \*J.R.Harris, F.C.Conybeare, A.S.Lewis, *The Story of Ahikar* (1913).

(11) APHRAHAT, Demonstrations: 1,5,6,8,10,17,21,22 in J.Gwynn, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fa-*

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thers II.13 (1898). 11-13, 15-19, 21, part of 23 in J.Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism* (1971). 2 and 7 in *Journal of the Society for Oriental Research* 14 (1930) and 16 (1932). 4 in S.P.Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (1987), 5-25. Complete French translation by M-J.Pierre in *Sources Chretiennes* 349 and 359; complete German translation by P.Bruns (1991-2).

(12) EPHREM. The following are the main English translations available (in chronological order):

- J.B.Morris, *Select Works of St Ephrem the Syrian* (1847). Includes the only complete English translation of Hymns on Faith.

- H.Burgess, *Select Metrical Hymns and Homilies of Ephrem Syrus* (1853); *The Repentance of Nineveh* (1853).

- J.Gwynn (ed.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers II.13* (1898). Includes Nisibene Hymns 1-21, 35-42, 62-68; Hymns on Epiphany

- \*C.W.Mitchell, *Prose Refutations I-II* (1912, 1921).

- S.P.Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit. Poems of St Ephrem* (1975; selection of 12 poems; 2nd edn 1983; 18 poems).

- J.Lieu, in S.N.C.Lieu, *The Emperor Julian* (1986, 2nd edn 1989). Hymns on Julian.

- K.McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns* (1989). Includes Hymns on Nativity, on Virginité, and on Julian.

- S.P.Brock, *St Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns on Paradise* (1990).

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- C.McCarthy, St Ephrem, Commentary on the Diatessaron (1993).

- E.G.Mathews and J.P.Amar, St Ephrem the Syrian. Selected Prose Works. Includes Commentaries on Genesis and on Exodus, Homily on our Lord, and Letter to Publius.

- A.G.Salvesen, Ephrem, Commentary on Exodus (1995).

For further details, consult S.P.Brock, 'A brief guide to the main editions and translations of the works of Saint Ephrem', *The Harp* 3 (1990), 1-29.

(13) BOOK of STEPS: Complete translation by R.Kitchen in preparation (Cistercian Studies, Kalamazoo). ch.12: in R.Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (1975), 264-8; ch. 12 and 18: in S.Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer* (1987), 45-59.

(14) CYRILLONA: FT by D.Cerbelaud, *Cyrillonas, L'Agneau veritable* (1984).

(15) BALAI: On dedication of church in Qenneshrin, K.McVey, in *Aram* 5 (1993), 359-67. (16) JOHN the SOLITARY: - Dialogue on Soul, FT by I.Hausherr (*OCA* 120, 1939); ET by Mary Hansbury in preparation.

- Three Letters, GT by \*L.G.Rignell (1941).

- Six Dialogues etc., G.T. by \*W.Strothmann (1972); FT by R.Lavenant (*Sources chretiennes* 311, 1984).

- Three Discourses, GT (or summary) by \*L.G.Rignell (1960); ET of no.1 by [D.Miller], *Ascetic Homilies of St Isaac the Syrian* (1984), 461-6.

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- Letter to Hesychius, S.P.Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer* (1987), 81-98.

- On Prayer, \*S.P.Brock in *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1979), 84-101; ET repr. in *Ascetic Homilies of St Isaac the Syrian* (1984), 466-8.

(17) ANONYMOUS POETRY: - On Abraham and Sarah in Egypt, \*S.P.Brock, *Le Museon* 105 (1992), 104-32.

- On Sacrifice of Isaac, \*S.P.Brock, *Le Museon* 99 (1986), 108-12, 122-5.

- On Joseph, nos 3-4, A.S.Rodrigues Pereira, *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux* 31 (1989/90), 95-120.

- On Elijah, \*S.P.Brock, *Le Museon* 89 (102), 106-10.

- Memra on Mary and Joseph, S.P.Brock, *Bride of Light* (1994), 146-60.

- Soghitho on Abel and Cain, \*F.Feldmann, *Syrische Wechsellieder* (1896); on Mary and Angel, Mary and Magi, S.P.Brock, *Bride of Light* (1994), 111-32; John the Baptist and Christ, Cherub and Thief, S.P. Brock, *Syriac Dialogue Hymns* (1987); Dispute of Months, \*S.P.Brock, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 30 (1985), 193-6.

(18) ANONYMOUS PROSE: - (Abraham of Qidun and) Mary, S.P.Brock and S.A.Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (1987), 29-36.

- Man of God, FT by A.Amiaud (1889); ET (of FT) by C.J.Odenkirchen (1978).

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- Shmona, Gurya and Habbib, \*F.C.Burkitt, Euphemia and the Goth (1913)

- Teaching of Addai, \*G.Phillips (1876) and \*W.Howard (1981); Martyrdoms of Sharbel and Barsamya, \*W.Cureton, Ancient Syriac Documents (1864), 41-72.

- Euphemia and the Goth, \*F.C.Burkitt, Euphemia and the Goth (1913).

- Martyrdom of Martha etc., Brock and Harvey, Holy Women, 67-81.

- Martyrdom of Anahid, Brock and Harvey, Holy Women, 82-99.

- Symeon the Stylite, R.Doran (1992).

- Julian Romance, H.Gollancz, Julian the Apostate (1928).

- Life of Rabbula (in preparation by R.Doran).

- On Abraham and Isaac, \*S.P.Brock, Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica 12 (1981), 225-60.

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(19) NARSAI: - memre on Creation, FT by \*P.Gignoux, PO 34 (1968).

- memre on liturgy, R.H.Connolly (1908); memra 17, G.Vavanikunnel, Homilies ...on Holy Qurbana (1977) 55-84;

- memre on dominical feasts, \*F.G.McLeod, PO 40 (1979);

- memre on OT topics, \*J.Frushman (diss. Leiden 1992).

- memre on Gospel parables, \*FT by E.P.Siman (1984).

- memre on Three Doctors, FT by \*F.Martin, Journal asiatique 15 (1900), 469-525.

(20) JACOB of SERUGH:

- memre on Virgin Mary, IT by C.Vona (1953); ET by M.Hansbury forthcoming;

- memre against Jews, FT by \*M.Albert, PO 38 (1976);

- memre on dominical feasts, ET by T.Kollamparampil in preparation;

- memre on Creation, FT by \*Kh.Alwan, CSCO Syr 214-5 (1989);

- memra on the Veil of Moses, S.P.Brock, Sobornost/ECR 3 (1981), 70-85;

- memra on Simeon the Stylite, S.A.Harvey, in V.L.Wimbush (ed.), Ascetic Behavior. A Sourcebook (1990), 15-28;

- memra on Ephrem, \*J.Amar, PO 47 (1995);

- prose homilies, FT by F.Rilliet, PO 43 (1986); ET by T.Kollamparampil in preparation;

- memre on Thomas, GT by W.Strothmann, GOFS 12 (1976);

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- memra on Melkizedek, J.Thekeparampil, Harp 6 (1993), 53-64.

- A number of memre are to be found translated in The True Vine 1- (1989-); for FT of certain of the Letters, see the bibliographies cited in Section VIII.

(21) SIMEON the POTTER: S.P.Brock, A Garland of Hymns from the Early Church (1989), 94-102.

#### (22) PHILOXENUS:

- Ascetical Discourses, \*E.A.W.Budge (1894); FT E.Lemoine (Sources chretiennes 44, 1956);

- Memre against Habib, LT/FT by \*M.Briere and F.Graffin, PO 15, 38-41 (1920, 1977-82);

- Memre on Trinity, LT by \*A.Vaschalde, CSCO Syr 9-10 (1907);

- Commentary on the Prologue of John, FT by \*A.de Halleux, CSCO Syr 165-6 (1977);

- Commentary on Matthew and Luke, \*J.Watt. CSCO Syr 171-2 (1978);

- Memra on the Annunciation, GT by P.Kruger, OCP 20 (1954), 153-65;

- On Indwelling of Holy Spirit, S.P.Brock, Syriac Fathers on Prayer, 106-27.

- Letters (see entries on Philoxenus in the bibliographies cited in Section VIII.

#### (23) ISAAC of ANTIOCH:

- Memra on Constantinople, \*C.Moss, Zeitschrift fur Semitistik 7 (1929), 298-306.

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- Against the Jews, \*S.Kazan, OC 46 (1962), 87-98;

- On incarnation, FT by P.Feghali, PdO 10 (1981/2), 79-102; 11 (1983), 201-22;

- LT of 37 texts (including some madrashe) by \*G.Bickell (1873).

(24) SYMMACHUS: \*S.P.Brock, Le Museon 87 (1974), 467-92.

(25) 'JOSHUA the STYLITE': \*W.Wright (1882); new ET in preparation by J.Watt.

(26) STEPHEN BAR SUDHAILI: \*F.S.Marsh, The Book of the Holy Hierotheos (1927).

(27) SERGIUS of RESH'AINA: FT by \*P.Sherwood, L'Orient Syrien 5 (1960), 433-57; 6 (1961), 95-115, 121-56.

#### (28) SIMEON of BETH ARSHAM:

- 1st Letter on Najran Martyrs, A.Jeffrey, Anglican Theological Review 27 (1945), 195-205;

- 2nd Letter on Najran Martyrs, \*I.Shahid, The Martyrs of Najran (1971), 43-64;

- Book of the Himyarites, \*A.Moberg (1924).

(29) ELIAS: LT by \*E.W.Brooks, CSCO Syr 7-8 (1907).

(30) CYRUS of EDESSA: \*W.Macomber, CSCO Syr 155-6 (1974).

(33) CHRONICLE of EDESSA: B.W.Cowper, Journal of Sacred Literature 5 (1865), 28-45; GT by \*L.Hallier (1892); LT by \*I.Guidi, CSCO Syr 1-2 (1903).

#### (34) JOHN of EPHESUS:

- Lives of Eastern Saints, \*E.W.Brooks, PO 17-19 (1923-5);

- Ecclesiastical History, Part III, R.Payne Smith (1860);



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LT by \*E.W.Brooks, CSCO Syr 105-6 (1935-6).

(35) PETER of KALLINIKOS:

- Memra on Crucifixion, \*R.Y.Ebied and L.R.Wickham, Journal of Theological Studies 26 (1975), 23-37.

- Letter, \*R.Y.Ebied, A.van Roey, L.Wickham, Peter of Callinicum: Anti-Tritheist Dossier (1981), 103-4.

(36) PS.ZACHARIAS: F.J.Hamilton and E.W.Brooks (1899); LT of whole by \*E.W.Brooks, CSCO 38-9, 41-2 (1919-24).

(37) AHUDEMMEH:

- Life: see 39, below;

- FT by \*F.Nau, PO 3 (1905), 101-15;

- On man as microcosm, LT by \*J.B.Chabot, Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliotheque Nationale 43 (1965), 70-72.

(39) ANONYMOUS:

- Memra on Epiphany, \*S.P.Brock, PdO 15 (1988/9), 169-96; and in Harp 2:3 (1989), 131-40;

- Cave of Treasures, E.A.W.Budge (1927);

- 3 homilies on Epiphany, FT by \*A.Desreumaux, PO 38 (1977);

- 3 homilies on the Sinful Woman, FT by \*F.Graffin, PO 41 (1984);

- Homily on the High Priest, FT by \*F.Graffin, PO 41 (1984);

- Life of Ahudemmech, FT by \*F.Nau, PO 3 (1905), 7-51.

(40) BARHADBESHABBA 'ARBAYA: FT by \*F.Nau,

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PO 9, 23 (1913, 1932).

(41) BARHADBESHABBA of HALWAN: FT by \*A.Scher, PO 4 (1907).

(42) SHUBHALMARAN: ET in preparation by D.Lane.

(43) BABAI the GREAT:

- Liber de unione, and Against one qnoma, LT by \*A.Vaschalde, CSCO 34-5 (1915);

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## VIII.

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The standard histories of Syriac literature in western languages are (in chronological order):

- J.S.Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (3 vols, Rome 1719-28; repr. Hildesheim 1975). This monumental work (by a Maronite scholar) provided the foundation for all subsequent histories of Syriac literature, and although much is now out of date, it remains the sole source for a great deal of basic information.

- W.Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London 1894). Wright had an extensive knowledge of Syriac literature as a result of his having catalogued the large collection of Syriac manuscripts in the British Museum, and this still remains a useful

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book for the more advanced student of the subject; it is not suitable, however, as an introductory work.

- R.Duval, *La littérature syriaque* (3rd ed. Paris 1907); this remains the best general introduction.

- De Lacy O'Leary, *The Syriac Church and Fathers* (London 1909). A summary treatment, and rather outdated.

- A.Baumstark, *Die christlichen Literaturen des Ostens*, I (Leipzig 1911). The section on Syriac literature is a helpful general orientation, and much more readable than the following work.

- A.Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn 1922). This remains the standard work, indispensable for all serious study of the subject; it has by far the most detailed coverage (including details of manuscripts), but the presentation and cramped German style makes for difficult reading (indeed, it is primarily a work for reference, rather than continuous reading).

- J.B.Chabot, *La littérature syriaque* (Paris 1934). Much shorter than Duval, but a useful introductory work by a scholar who had an exceptionally wide knowledge of Syriac literature.

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A great deal of information on particular authors can be found in the three volumes of A.Voobus' History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient (CSCO Subs.14, 17, 81 (1958, 1960, 1988).

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### **(c) Specific topics**

#### **(1) Early History of Syriac Churches**

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W.G.Young, Patriarch, Shah and Caliph (Rawalpindi 1974). A very helpful account of the history of the Church of the East up to and including the early Abbasid period.

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W.S.McCullough, A Short History of Syriac Christianity to the Rise of Islam (Chico 1982). Special attention is paid to the Church in the Persian Empire.

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before 1500 (Delhi/Hong Kong 1996. A helpful introduction for the general reader.

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S.P.Brock and S.A.Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley 1987).

E.W.Brooks, John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, PO 17-19 (1923-4).

E.A.W.Budge, *The Histories of Rabban Hormizd and Rabban Bar 'Idta* (London 1902).

F.C.Burkitt, *Euphemia and the Goth* (London 1913).

R.Doran, *The Lives of Symeon Stylites* (Kalamazoo 1992).

(d) Series of texts; main relevant periodicals and encyclopaedias

Series of texts and monograph series

Although they never formed a specific series, mention

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should be made at the outset of the numerous volumes of Syriac texts published (at Leipzig, between 1888 and 1910) by the Chaldean priest, Father Paul Bedjan (1838-1920).

- *Patrologia Syriaca* (PS); only three volumes ever appeared (1897, 1907, 1927). The vocalized sermo texts are accompanied by a Latin translation, and a full index of words is provided for each text.

- *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (CSCO), *Scriptores Syri* (Paris/Louvain/Leuven); the series began in 1903, and by now well over 200 volumes of Syriac texts and translations have appeared. The texts are all printed in estrangelo; the translations are in separate volumes; earlier ones were in Latin, but more recent ones are in the main modern European languages.

- *Patrologia Orientalis* (PO). This series also began in 1903, and many fascicles are devoted to Syriac texts. The script used is sermo, and the text is accompanied on the same page by a translation (Latin in earlier volumes, mainly French in later volumes).

- *Woodbrooke Studies*, I-VII (1927-1934). These are publications by A.Mingana of Syriac (and a few Arabic) texts found in manuscripts in the Mingana Collection, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England. English translations are always included.

- *Gottinger Orientforschungen, Reihe Syriaca* (GOFs). Many volumes in this series, begun 1971, are publications of Syriac texts, most of which are accompanied by a German translation.

- *Barhebraeus Verlag* (Monastery of St Ephrem, Holland). A large number of Syriac texts, literary as well as liturgical, have been published by the Syrian Orthodox monastery of St Ephrem

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in Glane/Losser, in eastern Holland.

- Moran Etho series (Kottayam; 1988-). These are primarily monographs, though two volumes contain editions of text.

Among other monograph series which sometimes have contents of Syriac concern are: *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* (Rome); *Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India* (Kottayam);

### Periodicals

Very few periodicals are specifically devoted to Syriac studies, but several frequently have articles of relevance. Those which are primarily, or largely, concerned with Syriac studies are:

- *L'Orient Syrien* (Paris; 12 vols., 1956-67). Many useful articles, some introductory, some more specialized, are to be found in these volumes, edited by Mgr G.Khoury-Sarkis. An index to the complete series is to be found in the *Memorial to G.Khoury-Sarkis* (Louvain, 1969).

- *Melto* (Kaslik; 1-5; 1965-9) and *Parole de l'Orient* (Kaslik; 1-; 1970-). Initially designed as a successor to *L'Orient Syrien*, *Melto* and its successor *Parole de l'Orient* include many important publications of Syriac texts, as well as studies. More recent volumes also cover Christian Arabic studies. An index to vols 1- is to be found in

- *Journal (Bulletin) of the Syriac Section (Corporation) of the Iraqi Academy* (Baghdad; 1- 1975-); the majority of articles are in Arabic.

- *The Harp: A Review of Syriac and Oriental Studies* (Kottayam; 1-; 1987-). Papers from the series of international Syriac conferences organised by SEERI are also published in *The Harp*.

Periodicals whose coverage is much wider, but which often include articles relevant to Syriac literature, are: *Analecta*

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*Bollandiana* (1882- ), dealing with hagiography; *Le Museon* (1882- ) with index for 1882-1931 in vol.44; index for 1932-1973 by G.Lafontaine (1975); *Revue de l'Orient Chretien* (1896-1946), with indexes at the end of every ten volumes; *Oriens Christianus* (1901-), with index for 1901-1986 by H.Kaufhold (1989); *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (1935- ), with index for 1960-1984 in vol.52 (1986); *Aram* (1989-).

### Encyclopaedias

The only encyclopaedia devoted solely to Syriac studies is in Arabic (with Syriac title *Hudra d-seprayuta suryayta*), of which only the first volume, covering part of alif, has appeared (Baghdad 1990); much of relevance can be found in the *Encyclopedie Maronite*, of which again only one volume (covering A) has so far appeared (Kaslik 1992). The following more general encyclopedias and dictionaries often have good articles on Syriac authors: in English, *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, in two volumes (Cambridge 1992); *E.A.Livingstone, Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, in a single volume (3rd edn, 1997); *Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* (Oxford, forthcoming); *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (6 volumes to date, A-D; in French, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite* (1932-1995, 17 volumes), *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Geographie Ecclesiastique* (1912-, 26 volumes to date, reaching only the letter I!); and in German: *Kleines Worterbuch des christlichen Orients* (1975), with a French translation (Turnhout 1991); *Lexikon fur Theologie und Kirche* (2nd edn. 1993- ); 5 volumes to date, reaching K (Syriac authors are rather well represented); *Marienlexikon* (1988-1994), in 6 volumes; *Theologische Realenzyklopadie* (1976- ); 26 volumes to date, reaching P.

**(e) Collected volumes**

Since 1972 there have been Syriac Conferences every four years; the proceedings have been published in *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* (OCA) as follows:

[I] Symposium Syriacum 1972 (ed. I. Ortiz de Urbina; OCA 197, 1974);

II Symposium Syriacum 1976 (ed. F. Graffin and A. Guillaumont; OCA 205, 1978);

III Symposium Syriacum 1980 (ed. R. Lavenant; OCA 221, 1983);

IV Symposium Syriacum 1984 (ed. H. J. W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant and others; OCA 229 (1987);

V Symposium Syriacum 1988 (ed. R. Lavenant; OCA 236, 1990);

VI Symposium Syriacum 1992 (ed. R. Lavenant; OCA 247, 1994).

The following contain contributions wholly or largely concerned with Syriac studies (in chronological order):

Gottinger Arbeitskreis für syrische Kirchengeschichte (eds), *Paul de Lagarde und die syrische Kirchengeschichte* (Gottingen 1968).

A. Dietrich (ed), *Synkretismus im syrisch-persischen Kulturgebiet* (Gottingen 1975).

N. Garsoian, R. Thomson, T. Mathews (eds), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington DC 1982).

M. Schmidt (ed.), *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Regensburg 1982).

Collected articles, *Festschriften* and Memorial volumes (in alphabetical order)

(J. Assfalg), *Lingua Restituta Orientalis: Festgabe für J. Assfalg* (ed. R. Schulz and M. Gorg; Wiesbaden 1990).

S. P. Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London 1984);

“ , *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (Aldershot 1992)

(“ ), *A Festschrift for Sebastian Brock* (ed. S. Abouzayd) = *Aram* 5 (1993).

A. de Halleux, *Patrologie et ecumenisme. Recueil d'études* (Louvain 1990).

H. J. W. Drijvers, *East of Antioch* (London 1984).

“ , *History and Religion in Late Antique Syria* (Aldershot 1994).

J.-M. Fiey, *Communautés syriaques en Iran et Iraq des origines à 1552* (London 1979).

(“ ), *In Memoriam Jean Maurice Fiey o.p. 1914-1995 = Annales du Département des Lettres Arabes, Université Saint Joseph, 6-B* (1991-2 [1996]).

(F. Graffin), *Mélanges offerts au R. P. François Graffin = Parole de l'Orient* 6/7 (1978).

(A. Guillaumont), *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont: Contributions à l'étude des christianismes orientaux* (Geneva 1988).

(W. Hage), *Syrische Christentum weltweit. Studien zur syrischen Kirchengeschichte. Festschrift W. Hage* (ed. M. Tamcke, W. Schwaigert, E. Schlarb; Münster 1995).

(G. Khouri-Sarkis), *Memorial Mgr G. Khouri-Sarkis* (ed. F. Graffin; Louvain 1969).



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(A. Van Roey), *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History* (ed. C.Laga, J.A.Munitiz, L. Van Rompay; *Orientalia Lovaniensa Analecta* 18, 1985).

(A. Voobus), *A Tribute to Arthur Voobus* (ed. R.Fischer; Chicago 1977).

(W.Strothmann), *Erkenntnisse und Meinungen II* (ed. G.Wiessner; *GOFs* 17, 1978).

### (f) History of Syriac studies

An overview of Syriac studies in Europe is given by S.P.Brock, 'The development of Syriac studies', in K.Cathcart (ed.), *The Edward Hincks Bicentenary Lectures* (Dublin 1994), 94-113. For surveys of Syriac studies in recent decades, see S.P.Brock, 'Syriac studies in the last three decades: some reflections', *VI Symposium Syriacum* (OCA 247, 1994), 13-29, and A. de Halleux, 'Vingt ans d'étude critique des Eglises syriaques', in R.Taft (ed.), *The Christian East: its Institutions and Thought* (OCA 251, 1996), 145-79.

### (g) Bibliography

Almost complete coverage of western publications on Syriac literature can be found in two books: (1) for publications of texts and studies up to c.1960: C.Moss, *Catalogue of Syriac Books and Related Literature in the British Museum* (London 1962); this is arranged alphabetically by author (ancient and modern); and (2) for publications for the period 1960-1990, S.P.Brock, *Syriac Studies: a Classified Bibliography (1960-1990)* (Kaslik 1996); this is arranged alphabetically by Syriac author and subject, with an index of names of modern authors. (The latter work was originally published in four parts, in *Parole de l'Orient* 4 (1973) [for 1960-70], 10 (1980/1) [for 1971-80], 14

Brief outline of Syr. Lit. (1987) [for 1981-1985], and 17 (1992) [for 1986-90]). A further bibliography, to cover 1991-1995 is forthcoming (in *Parole de l'Orient*).

### (h) Syriac manuscript collections

An invaluable guide to Syriac manuscript collections is provided by A.Desreumaux and F.Briquel-Chatonnet, *Repertoire des bibliotheques et des catalogues de manuscrits syriaques* (Paris, 1991). For illustrated manuscripts there is a standard work by J.Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques a peintures* (2 vols, Paris, 1964).

Almost all surviving Syriac manuscripts which are older than about the 11th century derive ultimately from the Syrian monastery in the Nitrian Desert, in Egypt, where they were collected by the early tenth-century abbot, Moses of Nisibis; a few of these manuscripts still remain in the monastery (now Coptic Orthodox), the majority having been acquired by either the Vatican Library in the 18th century, or the British Museum in the 19th century. (The oldest dated Syriac manuscript was written in Edessa in November AD 411). For Syriac manuscripts in India, see J.P.M.van der Ploeg, *The Christians of St Thomas in South India and their Syriac Manuscripts* (Bangalore 1983).

### (i) Grammars and Dictionaries

#### INTRODUCTORY GRAMMARS

Several are available in English, notably:

T.H.Robinson, *Paradigms and Exercises in Syriac Grammar* (4th edn, Oxford 1968); this covers the basic grammar reasonably well, but the exercises are very dull. Serto script is used.

J.Healey, *First Studies in Syriac* (Sheffield 1980); this otherwise helpful introduction (with good exercises) rather

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gives out when it comes to the weak verbs. There is a selection of annotated texts at the end. The serto Syriac text is handwritten.

T.Muraoka, *Classical Syriac for Hebraists* (Wiesbaden 1987). This will be especially useful for those who come to Syriac with some knowledge of Hebrew. It contains exercises and uses the serto script. A revised edition is to appear shortly.

W.M.Thackston, *Introduction to Syriac: An elementary grammar with readings in Syriac* (Harvard University, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1992). This excellent work has not been published, but xerox copies can be obtained from the relevant Department at Harvard University. The Syriac is unvocalized, but transcriptions are given as well.

In other languages, mention might be made of A.Ungnad, *Syrische Grammatik* (Munich 1913; reprinted Hildesheim 1992); L.Palacios, *Grammatica Syriaca* (Rome 1954); and J-B.Frey, *Petite grammaire syriaque* (Fribourg 1984). Many introductions have been produced within the Syriac Churches for the purpose of teaching children (and others) Syriac as a liturgical and/or as a spoken language, e.g. Abrohom Nouro, *Suloko, I* (St Ephrem Monastery, Holland, 1989); A.El-Khoury, *Companion* (Beirut 1972).

### REFERENCE GRAMMARS

The standard reference grammars are:

R.Duval, *Traite de grammaire syriaque* (Paris 1881).

Th.Noldeke (tr. J.A.Crichton) *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (London 1904); a reprint (Darmstadt 1966) of the German second edition (1898) contains some supplements, and contains an index of passages quoted.

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Two useful grammars of an intermediary size are:

C.Brockelmann, *Syrische Grammatik* (Leipzig 1899, with many subsequent editions); this contains a good selection of texts, for which a separate Syriac-English glossary was provided by M.H.Goshen-Gottstein (Wiesbaden 1970).

L.Costaz, *Grammaire syriaque* (2nd edn., Beirut 1964).

### Dictionaries

The two most practical dictionaries for ordinary use are:

J.Payne Smith (Mrs Margoliouth), *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford 1903, with many reprints). This is arranged alphabetically, rather than by Syriac (triliteral) root, and so is much more convenient for the less experienced reader of Syriac. It is especially helpful for phrases and idioms.

L.Costaz, *Dictionnaire syro-francais-arabe-anglais* (Beirut 1963, repr.1986). This handy Syriac-French-Arabic-English dictionary is arranged by root and covers all but the most specialized vocabulary.

A Concise Syriac-English, English-Syriac Dictionary, compiled by G.Kiraz and S.P.Brock, is in the course of preparation; the arrangement will be alphabetic.

None of the above give any references to passages in Syriac writers (sometimes a matter of importance and interest); for these one needs to consult two more extensive dictionaries:

C.Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (2nd edn., Halle 1928). Syriac-Latin, arranged by root. This only gives a small number of phrases and idioms, but is especially good for references to rarer words. The first edition (1895) has a Latin-Syriac index, but in the second edition page numbers only are

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given for the Syriac, and so one has to look up the entry each time.

R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2 volumes (Oxford 1879, 1901). Syriac-Latin, arranged by root. This magnificent work (and exceptionally fine piece of printing) gives ample quotations of phrases and idioms (many of which are taken over in his daughter's *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, but without the references).

A Supplement to the *Thesaurus* of R. Payne Smith was published by J. Payne Smith (Oxford, 1927), where the entries (Syriac-English) are arranged alphabetically, rather than by root. This is based on texts published subsequent to the *Thesaurus*. In view of the many further new texts that have been published since the date of these dictionaries, a further supplement is very much a desideratum, but it would be a formidable task to undertake. There is also a valuable Syriac-Syriac dictionary by T. Audo, *Dictionnaire de la langue chaldeenne* (Mosul 1897, repr. St Ephrem Monastery 1985).

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